THE NEGOTIATION OF MARRIAGE IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Elisabeth J. Croll

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis, based on documentary sources and a brief period of intensive interviewing in the People's Republic of China, is a study of the new marriage patterns as they have evolved in contemporary China and an analysis of the specific economic and ideological variables working for and against their social change. It examines the processes of change within the institution of marriage itself, in terms of the procedures of negotiation, the criteria governing choice of spouse, the age of marriage and its ritual and ceremonial forms. It argues that the substitution of the ideology of arranged marriage by that of free-choice marriage has not only brought the younger and older generations into direct conflict, but has brought the resources and sanctions of kin and neighbourhood groups into competition with those at the disposal of the State and new political associations. The variety of marriage patterns identified in this thesis derive from patterns of social behaviour evolved in the last two decades to mediate this competition between the generations and between primary and political groups for control of the marriage negotiations. The evidence suggests that these conflicts have been resolved in favour of the older generation and primary groups in rural areas and the younger generation and political associations in the urban social field. This thesis argues that in comparison to urban China, the structure and function of rural households has encouraged the older generation to defy the new ideology and maintain their authority over the marriage procedures, and that the structure and function of primary groups in rural areas has enabled them to retain their controls. In correlating marriage patterns with both social and economic relations within the household and between the household and primary kin or neighbourhood groups, this thesis questions both the analogies drawn from the comparative social fields of Republican China and Taiwan, and many of the factors believed to underlie this process of social change that have been assumed to operate within the People's Republic of China itself.

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NOTE ON ROMANIZATION

In this study I have mainly used the Hanyu Pinyin system of romanization. The exceptions are composed of well-known place names such as Peking and Tientsin and persons or village names associated with existing anthropological studies and which are already well-known in the Wade-Giles romanization. Where Chinese authors and titles have been written in or translated into English, then they remain as they were presented in the original texts.

A short list is given below of those letters whose Pinyin pronunciation is quite different from the sounds they normally represent in English, together with their approximate English equivalents.

c = ts
q = ch
x = sh
z = dz
zh = i

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMR	China Mainland Review, Hong Kong
CNA	China News Analysis, Hong Kong
CR	China Reconstructs, Peking
GRB	Gongren Ribao (Worker's Daily), Peking
HRB	Hebei Ribao (Hebei Daily), Tientsin
HZX	Huadong Zhengfu Xuebao (East China Journal of Political Science and Law), Shanghai
JPRS	Joint Publications Research Service, Washington
KMRB	Guangming Ribao (Guangming Daily), Peking
NCH	North China Herald, Shanghai
NCNA	New China News Agency, London
NFRB	Nanfang Ribao (Nanfang Daily), Guangzhou/Canton
P's C	People's China, Peking
PR	Peking Review, Peking
SRB	Shaanxi Ribao (Shaanxi Daily), Taiyuan
SWB	Survey of World Broadcasts, Far East Section
TKP	Ta Kungpao, Peking
WC	Women of China, Peking
XG	Xin Guancha (New Observer), Peking
XyP	Xuexi yu Pipan (Study and Criticism), Shanghai
XR	Xinwen Ribao (News Magazine), Peking
ZF	Zhongguo Funu (Chinese Women), Peking
ZJ	Changjiang Ribao (Yangtze Daily), Hankow
ZQ	Zhongguo Qingnian (China Youth), Peking
ZX	Zhong Xuesheng (Middle School Student), Peking

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The negotiations of marriage or procedures of mate selection may be distinguished by the degree to which persons other than the parties to the marriage, the bride and groom, participate in the selection and enter into the negotiations for marriage. Almost every society has been found to have rules governing the degree to which others may participate in the process of mate selection. Social scientists have usually identified two principal means by which mates may be acquired: by arrangement and by mutual volition (Winch 1971: 264). A marriage is said to be 'arranged' when it results from negotiations between the kin groups or persons other than the bride and groom. In this procedure the parties to the marriage contract are rarely consulted, there is frequently an exchange in the form of the dowry and bridewealth, and the negotiations are often mediated by a marriage broker. Mutual volition is the mate-selective procedure whereby a man and a woman select each other and agree to marry. They may or may not consult with and obtain permission from their respective families or kin groups, but in any case the selection is made voluntarily by the bridal couple. In cross-cultural studies, societies have often been categorised according to which practice is normally followed (Freeman 1958 ; Goode 1959). Within cultures anthropologists have drawn attention to the role of marriage systems in maintaining social order and cohesion, or to the coincidence of two processes of social change, that is the cyclical or repetitive developmental changes in the life-cycle of an individual or groups within a social structure itself undergoing a process of social change.

A significant feature affecting these anthropological studies is the fact that marriage is at one and the same time a process located within the domestic field of social relations and a process determined by its relations with the external field. For some time there has been much interest in the relationship of specific structures of marriage to certain economic and political systems. Radcliffe-Brown (1950), Evans-Pritchard (1951) and many other anthropologists have suggested that the well-defined rules and customs regulating marriage found in every society have as their social function the preservation, maintenance or continuation of an existing social order. They thought that where marriage threatened disruption or disorder to the established kinship or social class system, the stronger were the sanctions and disapproval with which it was met. Other anthropological studies have noted not the function of marriage systems in maintaining social order and cohesion, but their role in situations of social change. In particular they have examined changes in the procedures of marriage as they have been affected by contact with the culture of another country. For example Mair (1969), Barnes (1951) and Schapera (1966) each set out to study changing patterns of marriage in Africa as a result of a century of contact with European peoples, ideas and institutions. In each case they identified the degree and direction of changes, distinguished a number of causes and agencies of social change, and outlined the manner in which processes initially external to the indigenous society first impinged and then were subsequently incorporated into the society under study. The modification of customary marriage procedures were broadly comprehended within the concept 'culture contact' and the amount of change was thought to vary according to the degree of acculturation. The aims of these studies were either to aid the attempts by governments and administrators to

understand and control the direction of social change (Mair 1969), or to provide comparative data of some interest to social scientists enquiring into the transformations of marriage procedures and kinship organisations in contemporary Western society (Schapera 1966).

The early anthropological studies of marriage and related familial institutions in Republican China (1911-1949) were influenced both by the anthropological studies of 'culture contact' and social change, and sociologists of the family for whom the central conceptual issue was the relationship of industrialisation to familial structures (Smelser 1966: 115). The studies of Olga Lang (1946), Marion Levy (1949) and C.K. Yang (1959) each attempted a systematic analysis of the effects of the incursion of new ideas and new forms of economic organisation and institutions originating in the Western nations on the pre-existing marriage system and familial structures. Olga Lang thought that to the student of cultural change, Republican China offered a rare opportunity to observe 'a tremendously complicated process of transformation being produced in one culture by the contact with another' and to assess 'the relative importance of the new economic environment and the new ideas as factors of social change in China' (1946:xi). Both she and C.K. Yang were interested in the series of social changes in the family structure which had occurred within the family as a result of the introduction of Western ideas and economic forms into China. Marion Levy was particularly interested in the relationship between the changes in the family structure, which he observed to be taking place, and the process of industrialisation (1949: xi). All these direct and first-hand accounts of the procedures of mate selection took the movement from an arranged form of marriage to one of mutual volition as an expression of broader economic, political and social changes.

In the People's Republic of China the forms which marriage and the family take are also considered to be reflections of broader economic social and political systems. Following the example of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the forms which marriage and familial forms take are linked to particular stages of socio-economic development. In this connexion two passages from their works are constantly quoted:

> '... with the development of social reproduction, there is evolved a state of marriage and family, which is, in keeping with the existing state of society.'
>
> (Engels, Origin of Family, Private Ownership and the State, HZX, 15 December 1956)
>
> '... where there is a certain stage of development of production, exchange and consumption, there will be a certain social system of family, grade or class organisation.'
>
> (Marx, Letter to B.V. Aninkov, RMRB 13 December 1963)

Recent histories of the institution of marriage in China have followed the lead of Marx and Engels in identifying a sequence of forms from the 'most primitive period of free social intercourse and free marriage to group marriage within blood relations, group marriage without blood relations, the choice of mates and finally monogamy', and link them to a particular sequence of changes in the relations of production (ZQ 16 December 1956). The substitution of arranged marriage (fumu baoban ernu hunyin) by free-choice marriage (hunyin ziyou) as the form of marriage with all its ramifications most appropriate to a socialist society, has been taken by the government as one symbol or one measure of their degree of success in developing a socialist society.

What differentiates the relationship between changing norms of marriage and changing social structure in the People's Republic of China from that of most other social fields of enquiry is the conscious and planned nature of social change towards certain defined and explicit social goals. In 1950 a new ideology of marriage was introduced into

China and, although the reform of the economic system is seen as a prerequisite to the reform of marriage patterns, the subsequent movement to establish a new marriage system has been largely defined in terms of ideological change. As early as 1953, before the establishment of new economic relations, it was emphasised that the 'marriage campaign was to be largely directed against the remnants of feudal thinking'. It was defined as essentially a movement for 'ideological remoulding' to eliminate the influence of reactionary social customs within the consciousness of the people (P's C 1 March 1953). Again in 1957 the movement was described as a 'battle in which new ideas were pitted against the old, a struggle to get people to change their ways of thought' (P's C 16 November 1957). In the early 1960s, following widespread transformations in the economy, the role of ideology in effecting social change was again reiterated:

> '... after we have eliminated the system of private ownership of the means of production, instituted the socialist system of public ownership of the means of production, and thus laid a sound foundation for the socialist system of marriage and the family, the struggle between the new and old ideologies over the question of marriage and the family is a matter of decisive significance.'
>
> (RMRB 13 December 1963)

That the struggle to eliminate the old and introduce new marriage patterns continues to be largely defined in ideological terms has been confirmed during the recent campaign to criticise Confucius and Lin Piao in 1974-5 which was described as a 'deep socialist revolution in the realm of ideology' (JPRS 1974, 256: 11). Throughout the movement for ideological change in marriage systems it has been the aim of the government to eliminate the influence of traditional custom and ritual through expressing, exploring and communicating meanings behind symbols

and rituals and making latent functions manifest in order to 'raise the consciousness' of the people to effect changes in their social behaviour of their own accord. In this respect the government is sharing an assumption with some anthropologists, that once the social functions of symbols become manifest the symbols lose a great deal of their efficacy (Cohen A. 1974: 8). The strategy developed to bring about social change in China raises questions on the relationship of ideology to economics in bringing about social change. The emphasis on the role of ideology in introducing and maintaining processes of social change in China seems to be a departure from the usual emphasis of the Marxist theory of social change in which a more active role is assigned to the economic base.

It is primarily as a field for the study of the processes of social change that social scientists have particularly recommended the study of the People's Republic of China. For example, Maurice Freedman recommended the study of the People's Republic of China on these grounds. On one occasion he wrote that 'if Communist China is an experiment, or rather a series of experiments - then anthropologists should have been busy with it, testing their ideas about the transformability of society against attempts to transform it' (1969: 8). Surely, he thought, anthropologists could assess the extent to which pre-existing modes of behaviour re-assert themselves within institutions deliberately designed to exclude them (1963: 15). G. William Skinner also recommended the anthropological study of the People's Republic of China on the grounds that the modernisation of China is of special interest to students of social change. Not only was this due to the fact that it was proceeding under the aegis of Communism, but because of the extraordinary nature of China as a total system at the onset of the relevant change. He thought that the

impressive longevity of the traditional society, the continuity of its sub-systems and what can only be termed as an inherent capacity for renewal, had brought about the achievement of an internal consistency which was extraordinarily stable. Thus he suggests that 'the very process of modernisation, with its necessary disorganisation and reorganisation of the total system and the likely persistence of traditional forms whenever pressure for social change is relaxed should commend its study to social scientists concerned with processes of change in the contemporary world (1964: 521). Other social scientists have argued for the study of social change in China on the grounds that the scope and intensity of planned social changes are greater than that of other social systems on which most contemporary sociologists and anthropologists focus (Greenblatt 1968: 4). Within the context of social change these social scientists think there are important specific questions which anthropologists should properly ask and help to answer. Among these were certain questions to do with the role of marriage and kinship organisations. On one occasion Freedman asked:

> 'Has marriage reform (a key feature of the remaking of the Chinese society by the Communist state) disrupted the pattern of patrilocal residence by formally equalising the rights of men and women? Has the lineage remained an exogamous unit? Are marriages still "arranged" and therefore political?'
>
> (1966: 177)

He thought that a consideration of these and related questions would raise many issues of great interest to anthropologists.

Marriage redefined

The government of the People's Republic of China has not only redefined the institution of marriage itself, but has taken the fact that it is both a consequence of and has consequences for social structure as the basis of a strategy to implement changes both within marriage and in society itself. In China the institution of marriage has been defined as 'the social form of the union of a man and a woman and the foundation of the domestic group which is the basic social cell of society' (ZQ 16 December 1956). Underlying all the policies to do with marriage is the assumption that it is a necessary and 'natural' step for each individual (RMRB 29 May 1959, Lu Yang 1964: 7). For instance it is often stated that once young people reach an appropriate age, 'it is necessary that they find a life's companion' (ZQ 14 September 1962) and it is 'rational and irreproachable that they should get married and have a family of two children' (ZQ 1 October 1963). Although divorce is allowed by law, for both men and women it remains the exception; the normal concept of marriage is a stable union lasting the lifetime of the parties.* Freedom of marriage or free-choice marriage was defined as the provision of full rights to handle matrimonial affairs without interference or obstruction from relatives, friends, family and the public, and without regard for social status, occupation or property (KMRB

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* Divorce was more common in the early 1950s when many marriages arranged in the traditional manner were dissolved. Since the mid-1950s, however, it seems that divorce has become much less common. Certainly all the educational materials to do with marriage assume that if a marriage partner is carefully chosen at an appropriate age and on appropriate criteria then there will be little need for, or likelihood of divorce.

27 February 1957). The placing of the negotiations of marriage within the control of the individual parties, the resting of the marital bond exclusively on the congeniality of the parties and the strengthening of the marital bonds as opposed to all other kin bonds has invested marriage with a new significance for the individual. The educational materials alike recognise the importance of the new form of marriage for the individual. As one article suggested, 'viewed from the perspective of an individual's life, love and marriage are important matters in a person's life-cycle'. 'Choosing a life companion', it continued, 'can never be said to have no significance' (ZQ 14 September 1962).

The institution of marriage has also been invested with a new social significance as the basis of the domestic group. The domestic group or the household is said to stem from the marriage bond (ZQ 16 December 1956), and it is the domestic group which is to remain the basic social unit in society. As one article pointed out:

> 'The family, as a form of joint life of the two sexes united in marriage, we may definitely say will never be eliminated. The existence of this form of joint life is dictated not only by the physiological difference of the sexes, but also by the perpetuation of the race. Even in Communist society we cannot conceive of any objective basis and necessity for the "elimination of the family".'
>
> (HRB 8 April 1959)

The new form of marriage by self-determination and the strengthening of the marriage bond, however, was designed to redefine the familial and kin relations within and between households. The relations between the parties based on congeniality might be expected to affect vertical relations between the generations and the sexes, and especially those between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

The new marriage contract was also invested with a new social significance as an instrument determining social structure and a symbol

of the degree to which social structures have been rearranged. It both contributed to and was a consequence of the rearrangement of social structures. Of all the forms of association and social intimacy that expresses social equality, courtship and marriage have been singled out by social scientists as one of the most significant of indices (Barber 1957: 123). Certainly in China, the degree to which marriage patterns have changed has been used by the Chinese government as a measure of their success in establishing egalitarian policies and breaking down hierarchical relations. For instance the abolition of socio-economic criteria as a factor governing choice of marriage partner may work towards and reflect the reduction of social stratification. In the early 1950s a number of social reforms such as the reform of the education system, the introduction of an egalitarian incomes structure, the redistribution of land and capital and the gradual reduction of the private ownership of the means of production were introduced to substantially alter the former balance of class advantages, and it was anticipated that these structural changes would soon be reflected in patterns of marriage. In turn, the free choice of marriage partners without regard for property and other socio-economic factors might equally work towards the same end. For this reason the media have publicised cross-class marriages, between professional and factory workers or between urban-educated brides and rural-peasant grooms, as a sign of the decreasing divisions between the 'mental' and 'manual' and rural and urban social categories (WC March 1962; SWB 14 February 1974).

It is the instrumental function of marriage in introducing changes in broader social structures which challenged the assumption common in China before 1949 that marriage is the private concern of the individual or domestic group. Marriage as a family affair had always belonged to

that sphere of the social field dominated by the informal relations conceived as non-contractual, normative relations, based on kinship, friendship or ceremonial and ritualised relations as opposed to the contractual and formal relations of society rationally based on bureaucratic lines (Cohen 1974: xi). Marriage which was formerly defined as a family or domestic affair has been reallocated to the social, public or political spheres. In emphasising its public and political repercussions many educational materials emphasise that the marital bond which provides for the birth, training and education of a new generation makes it a matter of vital significance to society and not a personal affair or trifling matter of daily life (GRB, 15 November 1962). In China it has become an object of public and political import:

> 'We must regard marriage not as a problem of the enjoyment of "private life", but as a "cell" of the entire cause of Revolution, as something important to the interests of the whole society.'
>
> (TKP 22 December 1956)

In the People's Republic of China, the institution of marriage more than any other 'social drama' (Turner 1957) or 'sociodrama' (Duncan 1968), has become the vehicle by which the State has intervened and attempted to modify or change the procedures and symbols of the drama in order to articulate major changes in social relations between the generations, the sexes and between domestic, kin and other groups. Change both within the life-cycle of the individual and within social structures was to be effected through the manipulation of the procedures and symbols of marriage. These primarily have been modified to represent inter-personal relations based on an exchange between individual parties, rather than inter-group relations based on the interests of those groups. The substitution of the one symbolic order by the other negates or rejects the alliance and descent models of marriage which have characterised

previous sociological and anthropological studies of marriage.

A central and distinctive feature of the study of kinship systems, defined by Radcliffe-Brown as a 'network of social relations which constitutes part of the total network of social relations or the social structure' (1950: 13), has been an examination of the role of marriage in binding individuals into kinship groups. In studying the web of kinship that binds individuals into kin groupings, ranging from the nuclear and extended familial structures to lineages, clans and moieties, anthropologists have distinguished relations based on marriage (alliance and affinity) and those based on birth (descent and filiation). Because kin groups are usually exogamous in that their members must find their spouses from some other groups, all kinship ties involve marital ties that form links between kin groups. The relative importance or strength of blood (cognate) versus affinal relationships in integrating members and groups into society has formed the basis of the controversy between alliance and descent theorists.

Very briefly, descent theorists emphasise the role of marriage in reproducing the unilineal descent groups. For example Fortes (1971) placed the study of marriage firmly within the context of the developmental cycle of the domestic group. He thought it necessary to establish the domestic field as a separate analytic category with its own system of social relationships, institutions and activities which could be viewed from within as an internal system. Fortes suggests that although status in the domestic domain receives definition and sanction from the politico-jural domain, marriage is primarily designed to reproduce and maintain the domestic group. In contrast, Levi-Strauss, the doyen of alliance theorists, examined marriage as the mechanism whereby women are exchanged between men and groups of men. He has

emphasised that the total relationship of exchange which constitutes marriage is not established between a man and a woman in which each receives something, but rather, between groups of men. Women figure only as objects of exchange and not as one of the partners between whom the exchange takes place (1969: 478-488). Marriage then represents the relations between domestic and kin groups in which groups are functionally dependent on others for wives. This controversy between alliance and descent theorists has characterised most recent studies of marriage, but Rivière in a recent article (1971) reappraised the study of marriage and attempted to turn the attention of anthropologists to the composition of marriage itself or its constituent elements and the relationship between them. Rivière suggests that marriage is primarily a symbolic statement about one of the possible forms of relationship between the two sexes. 'What I am trying to do,' he says, 'is to get marriage viewed as part of the total male/female relationship' (1971: 66).

In China over the past twenty-five years there has been what has amounted to a rejection of both the alliance and descent models of marriage and a redefinition of marriage as an institution symbolising relations between equal partners of the opposite sex who enter into relationships of exchange themselves. This redefinition is not part of a theoretically-based rejection of common anthropological theories. Indeed, the materials to do with the reforms make no explicit references to anthropological theories as such. But the redefinition itself and the arguments cited in favour of reform make it possible to identify a contrasting model of marriage. Although it is recognised that marriage has the natural aim of begetting children, no longer is the primary object of marriage the reproduction of the unilineal descent group. In contrast to the old definition of marriage which had described the

purpose of taking a wife as the begetting of children to 'worship the ancestral temple and continue the family line' (PR 8 March 1960), the new definition of marriage rejects sterility as grounds of divorce. Not only is the absence of children no longer an unfilial act, but in the new socio-economic conditions of collective land ownership and collective welfare there was said to be no need to 'bring up children in anticipation of old age' or to ensure the inheritance of family property (HRB 8 April 1959). The new definition of marriage also rejects the other main purpose of marriage which had been to establish alliances advantageous to the interests of the descent group of the respective parties as a means of socio-economic and political mobility. The Book of Rites, which dating from the second century AD was held to embody the rules defining correct social behaviour, declared that the purpose of marriage was to unite two families with a view to harmonising the friendship of the two lineages (Chiu 1966: 4). This aim had always exerted a substantial influence on the controls over the negotiations and choice of marriage partner. In the new definition of marriage, it is designed to become a symbol of inter-personal rather than intra-group or inter-group relations with ensuing significance for the structure of groups and the position of women. In China proposed changes within the institution of marriage may be said to be an integral part of the conscious rearrangement of social structures.

Research and the People's Republic of China

Despite the pleas of senior social scientists such as Freedman and Skinner that anthropologists should turn their attention to the People's Republic of China, there have been few such studies. Freedman remarked

in 1969 that there has not, as there might have been, an anthropological voice to speak about the transformations of the institutions of kinship and marriage, the new norms governing inter-personal relationships, the reorganisation of local groups and the change in the nature of property. In contrast, he has found himself enormously impressed by the economists, political scientists and a few sociologists who have scrutinised the Press, studied the official literature, interviewed emigrés and weighed up the testimony of foreign eyewitnesses in order to build up a body of facts and arrange them to answer important questions (1969: 8). The examples of Skinner's treatment of the Chinese market town both before and after 1949 (1964-5), Martin King Whyte's examination of small groups and political rituals (1974) and Ezra Vogel's study of Guangzhou (1969) may serve as a few examples. There have been no detailed studies of marriage patterns as they have evolved in the People's Republic of China. M.J. Meijer (1971) has undertaken a comprehensive documentary survey of the legal precedents for, and the provisions of the Marriage Law of 1950, their purposes and objectives and the measures which were taken to implement the new law. In his study he points out that it was at no time his intention to describe the changes in attitudes towards marriage or the marriage patterns themselves. Meijer points out that he undertook to trace the purposes and functions of the Marriage Law and the way in which it has been applied because the effect of the Marriage Law on society could only be studied satisfactorily when it is possible to conduct sociological investigations under better circumstances than now prevailed in China (1971: 2). C.K. Yang who has probably undertaken the most comprehensive documentary survey of marriage and the family in China up to the mid-1950s, states that since 1953, the Chinese press has published little factual information about the problem of marriage and the family and

'it has therefore not been clear how the new trend is expressed in the actual marriage and family situation in the country as a whole' (1959: 210). This case can still be argued in 1977, although less so than in 1960, for the media in the past fifteen years has devoted considerable space to certain types of questions concerning marriage and familial relations. What is clear is that it is the range and types of materials available for study rather than the interest and importance of the questions, which has deterred anthropologists from studying social processes in China.

One of the reasons that anthropological studies of China have lagged behind studies in economic and political science is that they have set special store by first-hand and participatory observation. This was the basis of their brief 'to formulate and validate statements about the conditions of existence of social systems and the regularities that are observable in social change' (Radcliffe-Brown 1951: 22). The factor which, more than any other, has detracted from the People's Republic of China as a field of anthropological study was the closing of its borders to foreign scholars. Fieldwork, the main technique of investigation, was no longer a possibility. Instead the tools of the anthropological trade have been applied to Taiwan (Gallin 1966; Diamond 1969; Pasternak 1972 etc), Hong Kong (Ward 1967; Potter 1968; Baker 1968; Watson 1975), and the 'overseas Chinese' (Freedman 1957; Skinner 1958), or what has been termed 'residual' China. There are now a substantial number of anthropological studies which have examined various facets of social structure in these fields, among them kinship and marriage, economic and political structures and religion in villages, small towns and urban complexes, and their number is increasing. It is the availability of these studies which has caused Freedman (1963; 1964) and Skinner (1964: 521) both to

recommend the social scientist to take advantage of comparative studies of processes of social change or industrialisation in the three contrasting Chinese environments of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Communist mainland China. What is missing for such a comparative study of the 'modernisation' of marriage and kinship organisations, is not a study of their role in the modernisation of Taiwan or Hong Kong or for that matter Republican China, but an examination of marriage and kinship organisation in the People's Republic of China. In the absence of this study, anthropologists have been content to conjecture about similar processes in the People's Republic of China by drawing analogies from these and other comparable social fields. This thesis attempts to make good this omission by undertaking a study of the institution of marriage as it has evolved in the People's Republic of China over the past twenty-five years.

Scope of present study

The study takes as its starting point the introduction of the marriage contract as outlined in the first two sections of the Marriage Law (1950) which have to do with the negotiation of the marriage contract (see Appendix 1). As a preliminary, it surveys the procedures of mate selection which characterised China before 1949 (Chapter 2) and introduces the new policies and programmes of marriage reform introduced in 1950, their goals and the means by which they were to be implemented (Chapter 3). The following chapters are devoted to the processes of change within the institution of marriage itself. They each take an aspect of the negotiation of marriage and assess the degree to which proposed changes have taken effect. These include an examination of the degree to which arranged marriage and the institutional intervention of

kin and brokers in the procedures of mate selection have been substituted by 'free-choice' negotiations based on mutual volition (Chapter 4) and courtship has replaced betrothal as the dominant pre-marital ritual (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 examines the age of marriage and Chapter 7 assesses the qualities of the preferred mate. They ask how far the age of marriage has been raised and how far a narrowly defined field of eligible mates, based on the pursuit of class status and power, has been replaced by a broad field of eligibles characterised by the negation of such socio-economic criteria. In Chapter 8 an examination of the ritual and ceremonial forms of marriage reveals the extent to which they have been simplified both procedurally and symbolically. For each of these processes the varieties in patterns are identified and attributed to broadly defined sub-groups in Chinese society.

Research materials

The materials used for these studies are drawn mainly from two primary sources. A statement of the goals, aims and policies of marriage reform can be found in the law, government policy directives, abstract discussions and statements in the media and educational materials in all its forms, together with a study of the public reference groups or role models. The latter are a particularly common didactic form in China (Sheridan 1968). Role models* have been defined by social investigators in China as those which 'show common basic characteristics with the

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* Role models in the literature take the form of personal documents or life histories or life courses of an individual or collective either compiled in a face-to-face interview or written up by the respondents themselves.

totality, and possess a definite representative nature among phenomena of the same type'. That is, they carry the meaning of specimen or exemplar rather than the most common phenomenon or the statistical average (Hong Yenlin 1956: 39). For instance the life-histories of young men or women who defied their parents, friends and neighbours and chose their own marriage partner, waited to get married until their late twenties or chose a marriage partner regardless of their socio-economic status do not suggest that these are common practices. Rather they have been singled out by the media as examples for emulation. The process of selection of models as outlined by Hong Yen lin is to generally investigate and isolate the major characteristics of the totality, classify the totality into different types and select models from the various types to illustrate both the positive experience (positive models) and negative experience (negative models) (Hong Yenlin 1956: 4). An examination of those materials designed to publicise and educate its readers in the new forms of marriage illustrates the assumptions and propositions on which platforms are based and how they are to be implemented.

The second type of materials which furnish information for the basis of this study is the case studies drawn primarily from the press - books, periodicals, newspapers and monitored radio broadcasts. These consist of interviews, life-histories and descriptions of marriage practices for a particular area or enterprise and letters to the editor which appear in the press from time to time. The didactic nature of the press has been commented on many times (Vogel 1969; Oksenberg 1969). In the discussion of the press as a source of information, Oksenberg concludes that it tends to play a heavy exhortary role and informs the scholar more about how things ought to be done and ought not to be done rather than how things

are (1969: 594). This is certainly true of the abstract discussions of goals and policies to do with marriage, although even here and for role models too it can be argued that they reveal a certain concern with contemporary practical problems.* This may seem a surprising statement to make about role models, but they usually involve a sequence and relate the details of life-passage from 'real to ideal' states of behaviour. They assign major importance to the social norms by which the models choose to interpret their experience, the response of the model to a particular dilemma or choice of behavioural patterns and the role passage or sequence of experiences in the movement from one stage to another. In displaying these characteristics they are akin to the life-histories or personal documents recommended for study by Kluckhohn (1945) and Langness (1965). However, within the media this study has taken as its primary source of information that provided by the letters to the editor in the correspondence columns which periodically feature in magazines such as Zhongguo Funu (Women of China), Zhongguo Qingnian (Chinese Youth), Gongren Ribao (Workers' Daily) and various regional newspapers. For instance a number of letters concerning the age of marriage were published in Gongren Ribao in 1962 and Nanfang Ribao (Southern Daily) in 1962, the types of marriage ceremony in Nanfang Ribao in 1964-5 and choice of marriage partner in Zhongguo Funu in 1963-4 and Hunan Ribao in 1956-7.

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* In an interview with Edgar Snow, Chou En-lai has suggested that where there is an article published in the media about a particular problem it is an indication that the social attitudes demanded of those in the article are precisely those things which some people still find hard to accept. 'When we encourage the good and criticise the bad, it means that bad things surely still exist and good ones are not yet perfect' (Snow 1972: 228-9).

Letters to the press may provide a useful source of information for anthropological enquiry into problems caused by the pressure of conflicting norms and belief patterns. In his discussion of the use of personal documents in anthropology, Kluckhohn referred to letters to the press as one of the 'yet unexplored research resources on conflict situations such as acculturation' (1945: 105). Gustav Jahoda has used such letters as his primary source in his survey of the social attitudes and behaviour of young people in Ghana in 1959, and in the study of China, Chin Ai-li S. (1948) and Huang Lucy Jen (1962) have used letters to the press for similar short surveys in 1948-9 and 1956-7 respectively. The letters used in this study, as in these others, have revealed the existence of competing and conflicting values and customs dilemmas, and delineate the areas and forms conflict is likely to take for sub-groups in Chinese society as well as the status and power relationships involved. One of the disadvantages of this type of material is that the scholar has to be content with such information as the informants choose to give about themselves.

Most of the letters do however provide references to the sex, socio-economic background of the correspondent and his or her family, their class affiliation, and location of residence; all of which make it possible to identify certain spatial and social contexts in which particular types of conflict might be found. Perhaps more important, the letters usually describe informal group activities and glimpses of individual thought processes. For example many refer to the expectations and advice of those around them, be they peers, parents, kin or neighbours, which may be said to reflect the norms governing inter-personal relations. Many letters also reveal the thoughts of correspondents as they enter into conflict situations or individual rationalisations as they resolve them. For example, a correspondent might follow one of a number of thought

sequences such as 'I thought to myself...' or 'if I follow this advice then the result will be ... but if I follow that course of action the result will be ...' or 'I know I should do this, but I really think I shall do that because...' (see Appendix 2). But however interesting these letters, no assumptions can be made that the problems which they identify are representative or in any sense typical for China as a whole.

The principal weakness of this type of source material has to do with the method of sampling or the processes by which the letters are selected for publication. In the first place the magazines chosen are likely to draw correspondents from certain age groups and a certain sex and there must be a variety of motives involved in writing a letter to the editors of any one of these magazines. Generally the motives may well fall into one of two categories, those who primarily wish to appear in print and those who are asking for help with a personal problem. Some of the letters merely reflect socially approved behaviour in that they express official policies or goals and describe how they have put them into practice, although even this very process can be informative. The bulk of the letters relate to definite problems and dilemmas in which the correspondent is in effect asking 'What shall I do?' and some of the letters also expressly refute the goals and premises on which official policies rest. It is impossible to know the criteria used by editors in their selection for publication, although sometimes the editors will publish the number of letters received on a particular subject and summarise their general contents before choosing to publish a number. It is also a possibility that the very choice of letters published will influence the kind of letters which are submitted for selection. Although there can be no positive assumptions as to the representative qualities of the data, a lesser assumption can be made in that, unless otherwise

indicated, the features revealed by the case studies used in this study are not grossly atypical.

The lesser assumption rests on comparisons of numerous additional accounts by internal and external observers drawn from alternative sources of materials. Oksenberg has argued very cogently that research on the People's Republic of China requires the use of different types of resources in order to draw on the advantages and escape the limitations of any one type of source material available to the scholar (1969: 578). Comparative material has been drawn from a number of sources. There are the accounts of internal observers. It has been pointed out by Greenblatt for example, that while untrained in sociological and anthropological methods, writers of articles in the Chinese media have shown themselves to be keen observers of behavioural patterns (1968: 3). Certainly there have been numerous articles in the media which identify the range of general problems to do with marriage and generate abstract discussions on why these apparently inhibit the marriage reforms. There have been a number of external studies on subjects allied to marriage which are the result of interviews with those formerly resident in the People's Republic of China and who are now in Hong Kong. These include the study of xiaxiang youth by Gordon White (1974) and a short survey of the family in rural areas by William Parish (1975). Both of these contained useful comparative material for this study. In the last two decades there have been a few village studies undertaken by both Chinese and foreigners which have been based on some kind of direct observation. Jan Myrdal's two volumes on Liuling, a small Chinese village, was rich in the biographical data which it contained (1967; 1973), William Geddes undertook a brief survey of one of the villages originally studied by Fei Hsiao-tung (1963), David and Isobel Crook recorded their observations of the life of

a rural commune in the late 1950s (1966) and Jack Chen, a cadre from Peking, has recorded the events of a year in a production brigade in the 1970s (1973). Each of these, and particularly the latter, have provided data which has been very useful in this study. Indeed, it was the observations of Jack Chen in the 1970s which were partly responsible for the initial interest in this subject. In addition to these, there have been a number of pertinent observations drawn from a variety of travelogs published as the result of visits of varying durations to the People's Republic of China. What has often surprised scholars working with these different types of sources is their fundamental agreement. Although there are some subtle differences among the sources, they generally supplement each other to converge on certain broad generalisations and trends (Vogel 1969; Oksenberg 1969; Whyte 1974).

There is one last comparative source which stands out from the others in that it is based on first-hand observation. Although it is not possible to undertake fieldwork in the People's Republic of China, it is possible to visit China for three to four weeks at a time. The author did undertake two of these visits in summer 1973 and April 1977. The first of these trips followed the usual pattern of visiting in a group a wide variety of social institutions in a number of locations in the surrounds of the capital, Nanking and Shanghai and the northern provinces of Liaoning and Shandong. Such a trip does not provide the opportunity to gather macroscopic quantitative information or systematically investigate a representative sample of institutions or range of informants, but it is a valuable experience in that it enables scholars to gather a certain kind of data and information as a result of an intensive sequence of interviews, briefings and visits. At a certain point in time and in certain limited and selected institutions and fields it is possible

to gain considerable insights into a number of concrete and specific cases which may or may not reinforce qualitative impressions drawn from previous research findings. My own experience, and that of other scholars, has indicated that scant and uncertain though our materials and research methods may be, they do not appear to lead us in greatly distorted directions.

The second trip, in April 1977, however, was of a completely different nature. It provided an unexpected and unique opportunity to travel as an individual and undertake ten days of concentrated interviewing on the composition of the household, marriage and kinship relations in a selection of rural villages and urban neighbourhoods in one location, the Pearl River Delta and its environs in Guangdong province. For a description of the precise locations see Appendix 3. The procedures employed during the visits were quite standard. On each occasion cadres, or those in positions of responsibility there, gave a general introduction to the area which provided valuable background information to the village or housing estate. I was then taken to the village or housing blocks to interview members of a number, usually six to eight, of its constituent households. In the main the households formed a sample of convenience, including only those to which I was introduced by my hosts. The details of these visits are given in Appendix 3. In one village (hereafter called Jiang village), however, what began as a highly selected sample became an all-inclusive sample when at my own request a return visit was arranged. During this second visit I was particularly fortunate to be able to interview members of each of the twenty-seven households and make a complete survey of the marriages, household composition and kin relations within the village. Because of the problems of relating the form which social institutions

have traditionally taken and still take in Guangdong to the rest of China, I have added the findings from this second visit to the other case studies from documentary sources to illustrate problems, patterns and trends in the negotiation of marriage. During this visit I specifically set out to test the correlation of differing patterns of marriage with the structure and function of households and primary groups which I had already developed from documentary sources. In Chapters 9 and 10 on the relationship of marriage to other social institutions, I have used the materials from Guangdong extensively. The opportunities to acquire a survey of, or more comprehensive materials for, one village are still limited and previous collections stand out as landmarks in the history of the study of social institutions in China. Therefore where the thesis focuses on the data for this village, and it makes a substantial contribution to the study, it has been sub-headed to draw attention to the results of my own first-hand observations there.

The dimensions of the study

Ideally it should be possible to document changes through time (historically) and from place to place (situationally). However, the materials available for study are not able to provide data comparable through time. Perceived changes in the data may represent real phenomena or may merely reflect changes in the data itself. The discontinuities in coverage for a particular problem may mean that it has ceased to exist, merely become less visible or the problem has lost its salience at a particular conjuncture. This problem is particularly pertinent in assessing the effect of the Cultural Revolution on the procedures of mate selection. Many of the policies of the Cultural Revolution had direct

relevance for some of the problems revealed by the correspondents before the Cultural Revolution, but because magazines such as Zhongguo Funu and Zhongguo Qingnian ceased publication at that time, and the other media has been conspicuously silent on some of these problems, it is impossible to do more than conjecture on its implication for some marriage reforms. The case studies can normally be located geographically, but the collection of descriptions of marriage are thinly spread over a wide range of geographical locations and period of time. An alternative approach would have been to carve out a narrower segment of China in terms of area, of time period and subject matter, and for some purposes this more limited approach is clearly superior. Apart from Vogel's study of Guangzhou (1969) and a number of recent studies of Shanghai (1977) which are perhaps the most accessible areas to choose, not many scholars of China have opted for this approach. This stems partly from the nature of the materials available for study and partly from the interest in China as a macro-social, political or economic system.

The anthropologist must have a certain reluctance to embark on a macro-study of a whole society which embraces many millions of inhabitants dispersed over a large area. It can be argued by anthropologists that it takes them over a year of fieldwork and many years of processing and analysing this data to make a study of the social system of a single community of a few hundred people, and that it is absurd therefore to attach any scientific value to the findings of those who make generalisations about large complex societies. Radcliffe-Brown thought the most suitable unit of study for China was the village both because most Chinese lived in a village and because it was possible for one or two field workers to make a fairly detailed study in a year or so (1936; Lin Yuehua 1936). This recommendation was based on the assumption that from this patient

induction would emerge a picture of the total social system of China. Indeed it has been argued by anthropologists such as Firth that they should use the microcosm, or the study of small groups or of small units of larger groups and the operation of inter-personal and group relations on a small scale, to illumine the macrocosm (1951: 17-18). But the question remains how can the anthropologist jump from the microcosm to the macrocosm? Can the anthropologist be sure that the small systems selected for study may not be anything more than a sample of like small units instead of a microcosm of a total society? Should the macro-study await the development of micro-studies and is the reverse jump from macrocosm to microcosm any more of a problematic? It has been pointed out by both Skinner (1964: 50) and Freedman (1963: 4) that even when China was open to field work, the confinement of attention to the local community was to miss the very characteristic of the society which makes it so interesting to anthropologists, that is its scale and its scatter.

This case is even more appropriate for study of the People's Republic of China, when it can be argued that the State has intervened and played a more crucial role than ever before in changing social structures and integrated primary or the informal groups into new larger systems. As this thesis illustrates well, to have taken a single small unit of analysis, even if it had been methodologically possible, may have missed the very range of variables out of which the hypotheses have been derived. But all this said, there remains the problem of generalising from scattered and disorganised data in order not to make things simple, but to reduce a large array of relevant case studies to a system which is then amenable to analysis.

A variety of conscious models

If the nature of the data available for study has defeated any approach to a detailed social history or substantial study of a small segment of Chinese society, it enables the analyst to build up models of certain structures which are apparently common in China and seemingly persistent over a period of time. It is possible to express the range and variation in the procedures of marriage by means of a number of models which set out their characteristics. In this particular context models have a very simple meaning. They are not a statement of the average of all marriage procedures, but are rather summaries or clusters of characteristics which as a conceptual framework can accommodate a whole series of concrete cases. Models are used here after Barnes (1971: 118) and merely represent a degree of abstraction from and ordering of data without which it would be impossible to begin to think about explanations.*

Although anthropologists have claimed to be uniquely placed to reflect on latent social functions and relate institutional variables within a single social system, one level of research has always consisted of noting the conscious and articulated values, norms and constructs of the actors themselves. It was Durkheim (1951) who first emphasised the importance of taking cognisance of the actors' ideology or conception of the social system as a medium through which he is able to understand

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* It has been claimed that models themselves have an inherent logic and explanatory capability. For instance both Levi-Strauss (1953) and Leach (1970) tended to demand of their models that they be explanatory constructs meant to provide the key to observed facts of social existence, the principles or formulae accounting for its characteristics, and hence the logic behind social reality.

and explain his field of social relationships. Since his time anthropologists have noted the patterns which the subjects under study perceive in their own behaviour and their own particular rationalisations for custom and departures from custom (Evans-Pritchard 1951: 152). The study of conscious models was further legitimated by Levi-Strauss (1953). After Boas (1911) he differentiated two contrasting situations. In one, anthropologists have to construct a model from phenomena, the systematic character of which has evoked no awareness on the part of the people. In the other they have to examine on the one hand the raw phenomena and on the other the models already constructed by the culture to interpret the raw phenomena. He thought the latter was a far more difficult task and he pointed out the paradox confronting structural analyses in that the more obvious the structural organisation, the more difficult it becomes to reach it because of the often inaccurate conscious models lying across the path that leads to it (1953: 517). Levi-Strauss expressed such reservations and thought that for these reasons, a study of the culturally produced models often proved to be unsatisfactory. On the other hand, he also thought that it was by no means that this should always be the case, and therefore the anthropologist could not dispense with studying what he termed the conscious or 'home-made' models of a culture. Indeed, he said, 'they probably rank among the most significant facts ... they furnish an important contribution to the understanding of the structures, either as factual documents or as theoretical contributions similar to those of the anthropologist himself (1953: 527).

In the People's Republic of China there is a very well-defined model of marriage patterns presented in the media. Throughout the movement for social change in the marriage system, it has been the aim of the Chinese government to establish a spontaneous social movement in

support of a single model by articulating meanings of symbols and rituals and making latent functions manifest. It could be argued that it is this very existence of a clearly defined ideology representing social structure, processes and social relations as they 'ought to be' which has obscured the variety of social practices from observers. In this social field, perhaps the most obvious problem facing the anthropologist is that suggested by Levi-Strauss or the assessment of the accuracy of the conscious model. To overcome this problem this thesis followed the example set by Barbara Ward who supposed there to be not one, but a variety of conscious models in a similar social field.

Ward (1965) used the concept of the 'conscious' or 'home-made' model as a basis for a discussion of the problems of uniformity and variation posed by the unique temporal and spatial span of Chinese society and culture. She suggested that to talk of 'the Chinese family' or 'the traditional structure of China' is as misleading at the level of ideal patterns as it has long been known to be misleading at the level of actual patterns of behaviour. Indeed, she thought that scholars should postulate a number of different Chinese ideal patterns varying in time and space with historical developments and the demands of particular occupations and environments. Although there are and have been variations (and probably many more than is commonly believed), she suggests that in traditional China they are undoubtedly all variations on one easily recognisable theme (1965: 114). She searched for a means to provide an explanation of continuity and uniformity that can at the same time accommodate an explanation of change and variation. She concluded from her study of South China fishermen that there was no single version of the conscious model, but a variety of conscious models existing in the minds of the people under study which can and must be contrasted. She

identified at least three different kinds of conscious models: (1) ideological models, (2) immediate (home-made) models, and (3) internal observers' models.

First there is the ideological model or the version of what the actors believe to have been the traditional literati system.* This is based, however remotely, upon relatively uniform literati practice which varied little from sub-group to sub-group. Because of its wider applicability she termed it the 'ideological model'. Secondly there is what she called the sub-groups 'home-made' or 'immediate' model which is a model of the sub-groups' own social and cultural system as they believe it to be. In comparison to the ideological model, the various immediate models may well be expected to show wide differences. Lastly are the 'internal observers' models. These are models of the socio-cultural arrangements of Chinese sub-groups other than their own. As a type they differ from observers' models proper (that is the models constructed by outsiders, including social scientists) in that they are held by people who share membership of the same society. Ward found that this breakdown into three kinds of conscious models allowed her to ascertain the process towards uniformity in China developing out of innumerable and continued shifts in the various immediate models of different local, occupational and ethnic groups in the direction of their ideological models which were in fact remarkably similar.

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* 'Literati' is a term often applied to the leading Chinese social group because of the emphasis on proven literary qualifications as a pre-requisite to membership of that group. For instance, to draw attention to the importance of the connexion between education and political power in China, Weber used the term to describe the whole Chinese privileged upper group (1951: 107-41).

The establishment of the People's Republic of China marks a turning point in China when there is not only a range of conscious models of the type identified by Ward, but the introduction of a new ideological model designed to compete and conflict with not only the existing ideological model, but also the range of immediate conscious models. The isolation and identification of the varieties of conscious models in the People's Republic of China requires a dual approach combining a holistic structural or normative approach with that based on actor-focused inter-personal sets (Wolff 1966; Mitchell 1966). The former reveals the 'ideological' conscious model and the latter the variety of immediate or home-made models. The ideological model can be expected to be found in law, government policy statements, authoritative theoretical statements in the media and educational material in all its forms. On the second level, immediate home-made models may be revealed by the subjects themselves in the correspondence columns and debates conducted in the media broadcasts, magazines and newspapers, and interviews recorded by internal and external observers. For example, the continuous interaction of old and new ideologies has led to the existence of conflicting values and custom-dilemmas among different sub-groups and within the life-history of one individual which are well revealed in correspondence columns. Individual case studies can be used to ascertain the manifestations of macro-events or general large-scale structural changes at the level of the small scale face-to-face community. Changes within inter-personal sets or informal face-to-face primary interaction and groupings can be expected to be reflected in the norms governing those sets. Immediate conscious models, then, can be defined in terms of the role expectations of the ego-centric inter-personal sets revealed in case studies. By adopting this dual approach it is hoped to identify the variety of conscious models which influence social behaviour in China today.

It is suggested that the new immediate conscious models isolated and identified in this study represent a variety of attempts to mediate the conflict between the pre-existing and new ideological models. The new ideological model may serve as a standard against which to compare the syncretic forms. By examining the juxtaposition of old and new customs in the case studies and asking what of the old has succumbed, what has persisted, to what extent are they substitutions or additions and what explanations are offered for their rejection or persistence, it may be possible to hypothesise the socio-economic and organisational conditions which contribute to and inhibit the implementation of the new ideological model. For this reason Chapters 9 and 10 identify and discuss hypotheses based on the inter-relationships between marriage patterns and these socio-economic and organisational conditions. In Chapter 11 these hypotheses are compared to those developed by anthropologists in previous studies who have assumed that the 'modernisation' of marriage and kinship structures in the People's Republic of China parallels those of Republican China and Taiwan. The final chapter presents a brief summary of the findings of this study which inter alia challenge these assumptions and assesses their relevance to the debate surrounding the relative contributions of the new ideological model and socio-economic variables to the process of social change within marriage and kinship structures.

CHAPTER 2

MODELS OF MARRIAGE IN REPUBLICAN CHINA

In order to identify the variety of conscious models in the People's Republic of China it is necessary to distinguish the conscious models of marriage which characterised China on the eve of the promulgation of the new Marriage Law in 1950. It has been argued by Freedman that marriage rites in traditional China could be represented by one basic model (1967: 6). Ward has convincingly made the case for the acceptance of a variety of conscious models, but she also points out that they were of remarkable uniformity due to the operation and overriding prestige of the traditional ideological model (1965: 115-116). In Republican China (1911-1949), new marriage patterns emerged which no longer reflected the universal dominance of the traditional ideological model. Rather, this period is characterised by the presence of a number of conscious models which provided competition for the traditional ideological model. For the first time the latter came into conflict with new conscious models which called for the free-choice of marriage partner or the non-intervention of parents or third parties and the establishment of new households on marriage. As a result of this competition and conflict, conscious models developed in Republican China in opposition to the traditional ideological model. The new variety of conscious models then ranged from that of arranged marriage of the traditional ideological model to models of mutual volition.

The traditional ideological model was identified by its chief characteristic, that the marriage contract was entirely negotiated and controlled by the heads of the household and the parties themselves had no active role in the negotiations. The traditional ideological model

was based on the principle that marriage was an exchange between two households and not between two individuals. This principle had been laid down by the Book of Rites, which, dating from the second century AD, was taken to embody the rules of propriety. It stated that the purpose of marriage was two-fold: to establish an alliance between households with a view to harmonising the friendship of the two lineages and to reproduce the descent group or to beget children to 'worship in the ancestral temple and continue the family line (PR 8 March 1960). The injunction of Mencius that the greatest of all unfilial acts was not to provide descendents was taken very seriously (Legge 1895: IV, 313). Since marriage was not considered to be an individual affair, consultation with the parties or their consent to the match was considered unnecessary. The Shijing, a collection of poems dating from the early Zhou period (1122-221 BC), stated that to choose one's own marriage partner was to transgress the Rules of Heaven and violate the laws (Legge 1876: 98). Since marriage was a matter concerning the two households, control of the negotiations fell to the most senior agnatic ascendants of the parties. By virtue of his authority over the individuals of the household, the senior male was entitled by law to select a marriage partner and negotiate the marriage of any member of the household without the consent or even knowledge of that member. A broker called the meiren (literally match-maker or go-between) was normally engaged for the purpose of conducting the negotiations, but it was the head of the household who finally arbitrated the choice, decided the ceremonial expenditure and put his name to the marriage contract. The practice of arranged marriage and employing go-betweens to negotiate the marriage contract was said to have become such a time-honoured custom that it had crystallised into the belief that all marriages were brought about by the 'command of the parents

and the words of the go-between' (Levy 1949: 101).*

The literature on traditional China suggests that there was little competition from alternative forms of marriage. The parties to the match may have had some form of veto power over arranged marriage. There are cases in which young people protest against the traditional ideological model of marriage through attempted and successful suicides, entering religious orders, or joining anti-marriage associations, but these are avenues of escape or avoidance rather than strategies providing for alternative forms of marriage. The procedures of mate selection from the initiation of negotiations to their conclusion were characterised by a lengthy, elaborate and densely symbolic series of ceremonies, rituals and prestations. It was in the nature and number of these that there was some variation from geographic region to region and according to the wealth and status of individual households. A few of the more obvious variations exist in the personnel who actually undertook the negotiations, the age of marriage, definitions of preferential mates and ceremonial and ritual forms (Chiu 1966; Freedman 1967). Despite these varieties of conscious models, it was the almost invariable power of the jiazhang or head of the household which has allowed anthropologists to talk of one basic model in traditional China. It can also be identified as the dominant conscious model in the first half of the twentieth century.

The traditional ideological model remained dominant over much of Republican China and almost entirely in the rural areas. All the village

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* It is interesting to note an exception among the Miao peoples of the remote south-western Guizhou province. According to an old Miao album, probably dating from the mid-eighteenth century and translated by Eberhard, the most striking feature of their marriage customs was the complete freedom of young people in the choice of their marriage partner (1970: 225).

studies undertaken during this period, even in 1948-9, describe the traditional ideological model of marriage as the immediate conscious model operating in each village. In the 1930s these were the findings of a young Chinese sociologist in a village on the outskirts of Peking (Lang 1946: 122), of Gamble in a number of north China villages where marriage reform had been introduced (1954: 379), of Fei Hsiao-tung in a village in Jiangsu, one of the most industrialised provinces of China (1939: 40) and of Osgood in a village on the outskirts of Kunming city in Yunnan province in the late 1930s (1963: 273). Olga Lang writing in 1937-8 concluded from her own and other studies that in the villages of China it was still absolutely impossible for the young people to take any part in choosing their own mates (1946: 122). She herself investigated 360 marriages in 170 families in the villages of north China, Fujian and Jiangsu, and found that all the matches but one, where a college student had been requested to give his consent to the match, had been arranged in the traditional manner. Only three women of the 170 married admitted to ever having heard of alternative forms or 'modern marriage' (1946: 123). This pattern seemed largely unchanged in the 1940s. Although more villagers in the rural areas might now be aware of an alternative, it remained an internal observers' model rumoured and practised somewhere else, but not in keeping with local customs. Martin Yang (1945: 103-122) found marriage in a north China village to still be arranged in the traditional manner, although he also found there was some knowledge of the 'modern ways'. This he said was the result of the migration of one or two young men to the cities who had married second wives and established new households, thus abandoning their first wives in the village. These city ways were bitterly criticised. In another village located on the outskirts of Guangzhou (Canton) in South China, C.K. Yang found in 1948-9

that parents still controlled the marriage negotiations with no modifications, although here again they lived too close to the big city not to have heard of marriage as a result of free choice of partners. He found that they regarded such patterns of marriage as another of those 'strange fashions characteristic of a strange modern urban living especially among the foreignised rich city folks' without any thought that it might one day modify their own village customs (1959: 83; 176).

Arranged marriage: customs and practices

The central characteristic of the traditional ideological model, the control of the marriage negotiations by the older generation, might remain unchanged, but an examination of these village studies illustrates that variations in the form and content of the rites and prestations of marriage varied according to locality and the wealth and status of the individual household. Since the local variations cannot be outlined here in their entirety, a few of the more obvious variations can suffice to illustrate that there was a range of conscious models in these details. The negotiations for marriage were normally initiated by the head of the groom's household who employed a go-between, either a professional matchmaker or a friend or relative, to search for a potential mate or approach a particular girl's family and mediate the exchange of contracts and gifts. Cases are known in which the parents themselves directly entered the negotiations. It was normally the groom's parents who were responsible for inaugurating the proceedings leading to their son's betrothal except in cases of uxorilocal marriage (matrilocal residence),*

* Virilocal marriage was the normal form of marriage in China, although in exceptional circumstances the groom might take up residence in the wife's household. This form might occur where there were no sons in the wife's household and the groom might expect to acquire land and otherwise better his circumstances as a result.

when the girl's parents normally initiated the negotiations. In some cases the senior woman of an extended household, especially if she was widowed, might control the negotiations. In rarer cases the family of the bride might initiate a betrothal through a matchmaker as was known to have occurred in Phenix village (sic), Guangdong (Kulp 1925: 170). Where the senior members of the bride's or groom's households were kin or old acquaintances they may already have come to some informal arrangement at the time of the birth or during the early childhood of the parties and only later did they employ a go-between to negotiate the details of the contract. Whatever the varieties in detail, however, the control of the negotiations invariably lay in the hands of the older generation.

The age at which the negotiations were initiated ranged widely from birth to early teens. It was not uncommon for merchant and gentry classes to informally negotiate a betrothal at birth, and the traditional ideological model derived from their practice, while not explicitly stated, seems to have been characterised by early betrothal. The poorer the peasant household, the longer the betrothal of sons might be delayed because of the household's inability to provide for the expenses associated with betrothal. In the rural villages for which there is some evidence, the age of betrothal seems to range between six or seven to twelve, thirteen or fifteen years. In Kaihsienkung village (Yangtze Plains) a betrothal was usually negotiated when a child was six or seven although it could occur later (Fei Hsiao-tung 1939: 40), in Kao Yao village in Yunnan province, betrothals were usually contracted about the age of ten or eleven, although many were negotiated from the age of five onwards (Osgood 1963: 276), and in Taitou village in Shandong, betrothals were said to occur later than in some other parts of China. There girls were betrothed at ages twelve or thirteen onwards while boys were perhaps fifteen years (Yang M. 1945: 106).

Among the literati, the socio-economic status of the potential spouse seems to have been the most important criterion in the selection of a marriage partner. A common popular saying associated with the choice of spouse reflects the importance of this criterion. In establishing alliances, households were said to be guided by the old maxim that 'wooden doors should match wooden doors and bamboo doors with bamboo doors' (Yang C.K. 1959: 29). According to a study of lineage rules and a number of field studies this rule of homogamy was more particularly interpreted to mean that there should be hypergamy for daughters (Fei Hsiao-tung 1939: 50; Yang M. 1945: 107; Liu Hui-chen Wang 1959: 79). In most of the immediate conscious models this criterion was shared with, if not dominated by, concern for the reproduction and maintenance of the household. Hence the concern with the physical health and fertility history of the potential daughter-in-law and her family. These were of partic ular importance to households where there was likely to be only one woman of child-bearing age recruited into the household and where the household relied on the labour of the daughter-in-law to provide services requisite to the maintenance of the household as a unit of production and consumption. Beyond the more general criteria, particular rules defining categories of prohibited and preferable mates varied considerably and there seems to have been no one conscious model.

Although alliances with those of the same surname and with cross cousins were prohibited by law, this was not always so in practice. Both Freedman (1958: 4-5) and Hsu (1948: 80) point out that in some parts of China, marriage between persons of the same surname, though not of the same lineage, apparently occurred, although frequently the surname of one of the parties might be slightly altered in the genealogies. In the single lineage village, Phenix village in Guangdong, for example, marriage with

no blood connection was preferred, but because the number of surnames limited the local range of selection, people of the same surname but five generations removed might intermarry provided they had a name which might be changed and provided a slight change was made in the character. He quotes some classic examples of this: ling is changed to mu by dropping one-half of the character; wang is changed to wu by adding a dot (Kulp 1925: 167). In Kaihsienking and Kao Yao villages, marriage was largely exogamous and sometimes a husband or wife might have the same surname but be members of different lineages (Fei Hsiao-tung 1932: 86; Osgood 1963: 277). In Taitou village four lineages were represented within the village, but intermarriage within the village was discouraged here as it seems to have been in most of China (Yang, M. 1945: 115).

Categories of preferential spouses defined by kinship seems to have varied widely throughout China. A sampling of the literature indicated that the different forms of cross-cousin marriage were allowed, preferred or discouraged and that matrilateral and patrilateral marriages were not always symmetrically categorised. In a study of 42 lineage genealogies mainly drawn from the central provinces of China, Liu Hui-chen Wang found that twenty-four of the lineage rules prohibited marriage with spouses of the same surname (1959: 82). Even matrilateral cross-cousin marriage was thought to be comparable to a violation of surname exogamy. One rule for example stated:

> 'A cardinal principle of marriage is to avoid persons of close blood relationship; hence, the rule of clan exogamy and of not even marrying a person who happens to have the same surname. Cross-cousin marriage, though nominally a marriage between two persons of different surnames, is in reality a contravention to this principle and therefore a serious mistake in social custom.'
>
> (1959: 82)

Field studies of a number of villages in varied geographical locations illustrated the range of immediate conscious models in the twentieth century.

Figure 1: Preferential Marriage in Republican China

VILLAGE	MATRILOCAL CROSS-COUSIN MARRIAGES	PATRILOCAL CROSS-COUSIN MARRIAGES
1 Phenix	permissible	taboo
2 Kaihsienkung	preferable	permissible but discouraged
3 Taitou	permissible but undesirable	permissible but undesirable
4 Kao Yao	preferred (1st choice)	desirable
5 West Town	preferred	permissible

SOURCES:

1 Kulp 1925: 167-8

2 Fei Hsiao-tung 1939: 50-51

3 Yang, M. 1945: 119

4 Osgood 1963: 360

5 Hsu 1948: 79-85

Whatever the variation in criteria for selection, economic and political calculations by the elder generation were couched in the belief that all matches were 'made in Heaven' and were the predestined fate of the individual. One of the first rites symbolising the initiation of negotiations was the matching of the horoscopes or 'eight characters'. Each individual of China has an eight-character horoscope: two for each year, month, day and hour of birth. These horoscopes were matched by technical divination or by correlating their joint presence on the altar

of the household with the degree of peace reigning in the household over the subsequent few days. A favourable divination removed the responsibility for future relations between the husband and wife, members of the household and between affines to a supernatural level. Eberhard from his study of the custom in Taiwan and in lineage geneologies has suggested though that the rite could be and was either manipulated to give the desired answer or its astrological implications were in fact ingored. He concluded that the rite performed a useful function in allowing a match, deemed to be unsuitable according to other criteria, to be refused without attributing blame and interrupting social relations (1963: 207).

According to the ideological model the first phase of the negotiations or the betrothal were said to be concluded by the exchange of a formal contract prepared at the behest of the heads of both the families concerned and by the payment of the betrothal gift by the prospective groom's family to the prospective bride's family. The form and amount of the betrothal gift was negotiated by the heads of the families through a go-between and usually involved the transfer of clothing, jewelry, household goods, food and money. For all households it represented a major outlay. It was a requisite to marriage in all immediate conscious models, and individual sons would remain unmarried or become the 'bare sticks' in families too poor to afford the payments. What did vary was its total value and its constituents. The betrothal gift varied according to the resources of the families concerned. For the merchant and gentry family, the amount transferred was an opportunity to advertise their social status and could include large numbers of articles and a cash sum. Among those on the margin of subsistence there were often no gifts in kind, but it was entirely a cash transaction. It may be that

the proportion of cash to the total value of the betrothal gift decreases with increase in socio-economic status. Either prestation or delivery of the betrothal document was sufficient to signify the conclusion of the betrothal, a necessary step in the procedures of mate selection.

The law fixed no age limits under which persons were forbidden to marry and the age of marriage tended to vary according to sex, geographical location and socio-economic status. It is likely from an estimate of gentry practice that marriage by about 18 to 20 years or earlier characterised the ideological model. Field studies record varying ages of marriage. In Kaihsienkung village 92 per cent of the girls and 75 per cent of the boys were married before 16 years (1939: 40,52), in Phenix village the girls were married at an average age of close to 19, while boys were a little younger (Kulp 1925: 170,175). In Taitou village the average age was about 20 for both boys and girls with no cases of boys under 19 or girls under 17 recorded or known to the author (Yang, M. 1945: 113). In Kao Yao the average age of marriage ranged from 14 to 20 (Osgood 1963: 279). In West Town the lowest age approved for marriage was 17 years for males and 16 for females, but the majority of boys and girls married two, three or four years later than that (Hsu 1948: 88). An average age of marriage for China as a whole was calculated in 1929-31 in one study by taking 12,456 farm families in 62 localities and 11 provinces in China as a sample. It was calculated as 20.78 years for boys and 18.47 years for girls. In the families resident in north China it was found that marriage was at an earlier age than south China where 62.2 per cent of men and 79.6 per cent of women compared to 46.4 and 67.5 per cent were married before the age of 19 (Chiao 1934: 28,31). This trend was reflected in the average and modal ages of marriage computed for north and south China.

TABLE 1: Average and Modal Age at Marriage for the Persons Married During 1929; 12,456 Farm Families, 22 Localities, 11 Provinces, China (1929-31)

		MALE	FEMALE
Average age:	China	20.78	18.47
	North China	20.77	17.58
	South China	17.82	16.52
Modal age:	China	20	17
	North China	18	17
	South China	20	19

(Source: Chiao 1934: 32)

Another study ten years later in northern rural China, which was based on a sample of 5,255 families, showed that although a large number of boys were married before they were 15 years, the males did not marry universally as early as the females, the largest number of whom were married when they were 18 (Gamble 1954: 39-44). When the age of marriage was correlated with ownership of land the influence of a family's socio-economic status strikingly affected the sons' age of marriage and less so, but still noticeably, affected the daughters' age of marriage.

The most significant figures are those that show that while one-third of the males in the families with less than 50 mu of land were married before they were fifteen years old, the proportion rose to 80.5 per cent in the families with more than 100 mu of land. In the latter group 40 per cent of the males were married by the time they were fourteen years of age. The correlation of the higher age of sons' marriages with declining socio-economic status reflects the inability of the poorer households to meet the costs of marriage.

TABLE 2: Age of Marriage and Size of Family Farm in Republican China

	Under 13	Under 15	Under 18	Over 22	Total No. of couples
Size of farm:	MALES				
Under 50 mu*	14.7	33.3	61.0	20.3	490
50-99 mu	15.6	48.9	80.7	5.2	219
100 mu and over	26.3	80.5	94.6	1.8	57
	15.8	41.4	69.3	14.6	760
Size of farm:	FEMALES				16-20
Under 50 mu	1.4	8.6	44.9	4.8	60.7
50-99 mu	-	4.5	45.1	1.9	76.7
100 mu and over	1.8	12.4	57.8	0.0	73.7
	1.0	7.8	46.0	3.7	72.6

(Source: Gamble 1954: 44)

* 1 mu = 0.066 hectare or 0.1647 acres

According to Ching dynasty law and custom a marriage was invalid and without legal effect unless it was the occasion of public celebration and recognition (Chiu 1966: 4). No law prescribed any compulsory forms or procedures to be followed in the performance of marriage ceremonies, but the customs and rules of propriety handed down from generation to generation of gentry suggest an ideal model characterised by a lengthy and elaborate sequence of ceremonies and prestations which provided for the separation of the bride from her natal home and her integration into her husband's household. There were some geographical variations and only those with wealth and status could live up to these in their totality, but all marriage ceremonies reflected the fact that the marriage contract

was negotiated between heads of households and denied the importance of the individual participants. They emphasised the importance of the families over individuals by emphasising the continuity of the ancestral line, by worshipping the ancestors and introducing the wife to the members of the husband's kin group. They made continuous references to the bride's future roles as a servile daughter-in-law and bearer of heirs. In some areas the bridegroom awaited his bride at his home and in others he himself went to fetch his bride and accompanied her sedan chair on its return journey. The extent to which the bride's kin appeared at the marriage ceremonies within the groom's household varied from one area of China to another. But the sequence of the ceremonies and prestations, their number and form, chiefly varied according to the wealth and status of the families concerned. The wealthier the family the more elaborate the ceremony.

The provision of a dowry was also a visible symbol of wealth and status. Dowry has been defined as the property given to daughters to take with them into marriage and it forms one of the series of prestations between the kin of the groom and the kin of the bride (Goody and Tambiah 1973). Goody has argued that dowry should be treated as a form of pro-mortem inheritance to the bride and within the complex of women's property rights (Goody 1975: 1,17). Both Freedman (1966) and McCreery (1976) have argued that in China it is the symbolic attributes of dowry rather than the female claims on property which guides the provision of the dowry. They distinguish the definite legal rights to inheritance enjoyed by the basic shareholders, jiben youfen ren, from the privilege of receiving a dowry which might or might not be enjoyed by women as the 'optional shareholders', zhuogei youfen ren. At the discretion of the basic shareholders, women might or might not receive movable, as

opposed to patrilineal, property in marriage. Freedman puts a unilateral stress on the symbolic significance of the dowry. He argues that while the endowment of the bride might cause a considerable economic drain on her family's resources, they provide it

> 'not because the girl has any specific economic claims on them (she is not a member of the property-owning unit) but because their own status is at stake; a bride-giving family must, in order to assert itself against the family to which it has lost a woman, send her off in the greatest manner they can afford. And it is no accident, therefore, that dowry and trousseau are put on open display; they are not private benefactions to the girl but a public demonstration of the means and standing of her natal family.'
>
> (Freedman 1966: 55)

The daughters of the wealthy, then, can expect to be sent off with a substantial dowry in the form of jewelry, clothes, household furnishings and cash. The wealthier the family the more likely the dowry provided by the girl's household would more than match the gifts made by the groom's family at the time of betrothal. Among the peasants and the artisan classes, the dowry was often less than the amount received in betrothal gifts. For the poor, the betrothal gift received for daughters might form the fund out of which brides were procured for sons, but it seems that in some areas the stigma attached to this deviation from the ideological model and the community gossip which it aroused caused families to provide for their daughters if they possibly could in order to escape talk of marriage by purchase, maimai hunyin (Yang M. 1945: 108). In this respect deviations from the ideological model were rectified at the first opportunity by the socially mobile.

The provision and size of the marriage feasts was also a ceremonial obligation which was met by all those who could possibly afford it. Because its nature and size varied with social status, it too represented a relatively heavy expenditure for rich and poor alike. In Peking the

cost of a group of weddings was found to vary from 1.5 to 9.0 times the monthly family income, but for one half of them the expenditure was from 4.0 to 4.5 times a month's income (Gamble 1933: 199). In rural areas where the average annual income ranged from $185 to $247,* a rough estimate of expenses of a wedding for the groom's family ranged from $200 for a wealthy family, $100 for a middle-class family and $50 for a poorer family. For the bride's family the expenses could often be twice as much for the groom's family (Gamble 1954: 383). The wealthy of the towns and countryside might spend thousands of dollars to mark the occasion of a son's or daughter's marriage.

One variation of arranged marriage sought to avoid the ceremonial expenses of marriage altogether. This was the tang yang xi (daughter-in-law raised from childhood) (Wolf, 1968: 864) or siaosiv (little daughter-in-law) (Fei Hsiao-tung 1939:53) system, whereby the small daughter-in-law was adopted into the household of the groom at the time of betrothal. It was a practice adopted by poorer families and the advantages of this form of marriage were said to obviate the need for marriage gifts and elaborate ceremony. In addition the girl's family immediately cut their total food consumption by reducing the number of mouths to feed and in turn the boy's family gained the girl's domestic labour and early accustomed her to the habits of the household thus reducing areas of conflict in her relations with her future mother-in-law (Wolf, A. 1968). In the study of 12,456 farm families in 22 localities in 1929-31, this custom was reported to exist in 19 out of the 22 localities studied, although this was not a frequent occurrence. The custom was present in 0.5 per cent of the households in the overall

* $ dollars = Chinese silver dollars

sample and in 0.1 per cent and 0.8 per cent for north and south China respectively (Chiao, 1934:11). In the mid-1930s, however, Fei Hsiao-tung found that in one village, of the 439 married women 74 or 17 per cent had been siaosiv and among the unmarried girls 39 per cent were siaosiv (1939: 54). This proportion caused Fei Hsiao-tung to suggest that it was a form of marriage resorted to in times of economic depression. According to his informants this type of marriage was very popular after the Taiping rebellion, but it had given way to the traditional type as soon as normal conditions had been recovered. This led Fei Hsiao-tung to suggest that the depression of rural industry from the 1920s onwards had caused a similar recurrence of the practice in the 1930s (1939: 55).

These were some of the variations in the form and content of the rites and prestations of marriage, but they were variations on one visible theme, the exchange of women between households which was entirely negotiated and controlled by the heads of the respective households. But in the twentieth century alternative conscious models had emerged which rejected the central principle of arranged marriage and thereby challenged the dominance of the traditional ideological model in the cities and in some provincial towns.

New forms of marriage

The new conscious models had their origins in the introduction of a new ideology and economic relations into China in the early twentieth century. The Western concepts of 'freedom', 'individualism' and 'democracy' introduced by intellectuals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reform movements were discussed and debated in the new

periodic press which accompanied the movement. Articles in the Chinese periodicals began to contrast the procedures in mate selection in China with those in Europe and North America, and the cause of 'free choice' marriage became closely linked with those of individualism, freedom and equality of the sexes. The reformer Wu Zhihui (1908), for example, openly advocated that 'men and women should freely mate, purely on the basis of love with both parties willing ...'. At the same time, the first magazines for women demanded that, among other rights, they should have the right to marry freely (Chen Dongynan 1937: 229-30). In 1907 an English newspaper published in Shanghai reported that an article in a Chinese magazine had created a sensation by asserting that Chinese women should be allowed individual freedom and exercise their right of choice in regard to their future husbands. The article contrasted the custom of seclusion of women and the 'garrulous go-betweens' with the free association of the sexes and the attentions of the 'courting swain' in other lands (NCH 9 August 1907).

The contents of the new periodic press encouraged young students to review and reject their traditional roles of submission within the family and especially their lack of participation in their own marriage negotiations. The idea of romantic love, taken up as an expression of the equality of the sexes, individualism, freedom and self-expression or self-fulfilment, became a cause of popular appeal among students in the New Culture or Renaissance of 1916 and the subsequent May Fourth movement of 1919. In this movement the term 'family revolution' was adopted as a popular slogan, for it was the traditional family system above all which was identified by the students as the chief obstacle to individual development, democracy and national solidarity, which were all seen to be requisite to the independence and progress of their

country. The emancipation of the individual from the inhibiting authority and controls of the household head and the 'old family system' came to centre on the right of the individual to choose his or her own marriage partner free from parental interference. Free choice of marriage partner became a symbol or statement of wider social rebellion in the May Fourth movement.

These new ideological forces coincided with the introduction of new socio-economic developments in Republican China which occurred as the result of a gradual process of industrialisation and urbanisation brought about by both the influx of foreign capital and the investment of Chinese capital in trade and industry. Large numbers of manufacturing industries began to be established in cities like Shanghai, Tientsin and Wuxi which introduced new and cheap commodities into the markets of China. These had the effect of changing patterns of consumption, reducing the spare-time and side-line production of the individual households and increasing their reliance on sources of cash income. The combined effect was to reduce the self-sufficiency of the household as a unit of production and increase the amount of surplus farm labour per household. At the same time the new employment opportunities in the professions and in the manufacturing sector, although highly concentrated in the main urban areas, recruited and absorbed the surplus labour from a wide rural hinterland. Peasant youths were encouraged to move in unprecedented numbers from their individual households to small local towns and from there to large industrial centres. The establishment of schools in rural areas allowed numbers of boys and girls to undertake further education and move into the expanding clerical, business and professional occupations. By the late 1930s it was estimated that in some areas of China there was hardly a household which did not have

daughters and sons working in urban areas (Lang 1946: 159). It was the migration of young people to the cities which was a key factor contributing to the dispersal and decreasing solidity of the hu (household). This mobility and the new forms of economic support alternative to that of the parental household allowed for and even encouraged the practise of new conscious models in marriage.

The demand for free-choice of marriage partner called for the non-intervention of parents or third parties in the negotiations of marriage and the establishment of a new household on marriage. The literature of the period, autobiographies, biographies, letters and articles indicate that a range of marriage patterns developed in Republican China which challenged the dominance of the traditional ideological model. The new variety of conscious models ranged from consultation with the parties in the initiation of the marriage negotiations to marriage by mutual volition. The procedure of selection can be broken down into three stages: the initiation of the negotiations, mechanisms providing for consent by third parties, and the conclusion of the negotiations. Thus the range of conscious models can be summarised as follows:

Figure 2: The Range of Immediate Conscious Models in the Republic of China

	INITIATION	CONSENT	CONCLUSION
Traditional Ideological Model	Parents	-	Parents
Immediate model 1	Parents	Parties	Parents
Immediate model 2a	Parties	Parents	Parents
Immediate model 2b	Parties	Parents	Parties
Immediate model 3	Parties	-	Parties

In the first new immediate conscious model the parties are invited to give their consent to the negotiations which are conducted in the same manner as in the traditional ideological model. The parents initiate the marriage negotiations, but once the initial terms are agreed the young people are consulted to give their consent to the match prior to the conclusion of the negotiations. It may be a purely verbal consultation or an exchange of photograph , or the go-between in conducting the negotiations may arrange for the families to meet or more often to view one another in the public gardens or in a tea house at a specified time. In one gentry household in Hebei province at the same time as the elders of the family reminded its members 'that marriage was not a relation for personal pleasure, but a contract involving the ancestors, descendants and property', they allowed the daughter of the home to choose one from a number of suitable spouses chosen by them. She was allowed to choose one of five cards proposing marriage which were lain face down in the presence of the elder of the household (Waln 1933: 114-7). In another case the parents who had chosen a marriage partner for their son actively encouraged him to get to know the girl before proceeding to their final acceptance of the match (Chin 1948: 4). Although this concession to the younger generation was often reduced to a mere formality, the establishment of the principle of consultation formed an important adaptation of the traditional ideological model. Although this pattern demanded the least compromise on the part of both generations, it normally required the initiative or at least tacit consent of the older generation in order to modify the procedures of mate selection. Perhaps this is why it seems to have been the least common of the new immediate models to be introduced into Republican China.

A more common alternative involved a radical departure from or even a complete rejection of the traditional ideological model.

In the other new immediate models it was the younger generation who took over the initiative in the negotiations of their marriage. In the second immediate model the parties to the marriage initiated their own negotiations, obtained their parents' consent and either the parents took over and concluded the negotiations (2a) or the parties themselves, with the requisite consent, remained in control of the negotiation process (2b). If parental consent was requested but not forthcoming, the parties often declined to pursue parental consent either because they feared potential or experienced real conflict. Consent too was often rendered unnecessary by the dispersal of the household as a result of death or migration. In both these circumstances the parties proceeded to directly conclude their own negotiations (model 3). The appropriation of initiative in the marriage negotiations by the younger generation very often required two important procedures. Prior to choosing their own marriage partners and initiating negotiations, they were often forced to defy their parents and break off betrothals previously arranged by their parents. This often formed the main stumbling block to the establishment of the new conscious models 2 and 3. Many of the personal documents written by the younger generations in the early decades of this century illustrate that the defiance of betrothal was the first step in the initiation of the negotiations. There were few precedents to follow. In one autobiography, a young student described how anxious she was and puzzled as to what course to adopt when she finally decided to defy her mother and father and break off her betrothal (Chao 1947: 77).

> There was the question who should bring the question to whom. There was no precedent to follow, because the thing was unprecedented. I thought at first that, since the families had made the engagement, they should be responsible for breaking it. On the other hand, since it was on the ground of freedom of the individual that

I had based any move I thought I should write to my cousin myself.'

In another autobiography written ten years later, another girl student described how she returned home to fight the old system with its own weapons and on its own ground. 'If she did not, how could she with a clear conscious contract a marriage of her own choosing' (Hsieh 1943: 145). Her parents adamantly countered all her arguments for free-choice charging her with defiance of parental authority, ruin of the family reputation, disgracing the ancestors and opposing the will of Heaven. Finally her attempts to challenge custom and tradition caused them to imprison her within the household.

The second step in the initiation of the marriage negotiations was to exercise free-choice marriage and select a partner for oneself. The opportunities for finding a mate without the introduction of parents or go-between were far from institutionalised. The new pattern required the establishment of a whole new pattern of association between members of the opposite sex which were neither those of avoidance nor those of marriage. In a gentry household in Hebei province in the early twentieth century, one woman of the older generation countered the arguments of the rebellious young by asking: 'What will become of girls when they have go to out and hunt for their mates?' She thought that 'if their families cannot help them get married, then they will have to become bold and deceitful, preying on any man they can get yet pretending that they are not wanting one. Only the most artful will mate. Shy, plain, good maids will wither into a fruitless age' (Waln 1933: 73). There was little association of the sexes outside of educational institutes and most of those who initiated their own marriage negotiations relied on mutual friends, cousins, brothers and sisters to introduce or make the first

contact with one viewed from afar. Love letters were a common means of establishing communication and enjoyed a certain fashion among students at the new schools and higher educational institutes (Hsieh 1943; Wong Su-ling 1953). The case of one college student described by Lin Yueh-hwa in The Golden Wing (1948: 113-4) can be considered representative of model 2a. He was determined to negotiate a marriage of free choice and was interested in a student at a girls' mission school. Twice he wrote to her seeking her friendship, but he received no reply. If she had answered his letters, it would mean that she considered herself engaged to him, for that was the general convention of free marriage at the time. When the young man wrote his third letter, he simultaneously sent a message to his own brother who was a good friend of the girl's uncle - the husband of her father's sister. After receiving some advice and guidance from her uncle, the girl replied to the student's letter proposing to her by post. They exchanged photographs and the sworn brother and girl's uncle began to talk the matter over with the two families who made the arrangements to conclude the negotiations. In many cases where the young people selected their own marriage partner, the parents took over the negotiations and concluded them in the traditional manner according to customary rites and ceremonies often concealing the fact that they had not initiated the negotiations themselves.

In some cases the young people merely wrote to their parents or asked their consent to the match in person before proceeding to conclude the negotiations themselves (2b). In these cases they normally took this request for consent as a sign of their intentions and dispensed with betrothal ceremonies altogether. Wong Su-ling related in a personal history how she and a fellow student courted for two years during the

anti-Japanese War before he proposed to her by letter. She replied in the same way that she would be willing to accept, but only if he would secure the permission of her family in the usual manner and if he would be willing to establish their own separate and independent household. Whereupon he immediately wrote to his father to ask his permission, even though, as she said, he had considerable property of his own and could act independently. They had both agreed 'that we desired to have his father's consent and blessing'. Securing permission from her family took months because of the distances and difficulties involved in communicating with them through intermediaries, and it was not until they had both gone to America that they had at long last 'squared the matter with the requirements of Chinese custom enabling us to feel that we were really engaged' (1953: 367).

Others did not request parental consent but proceeded directly of their own accord to conclude their own negotiations. One young daughter of a gentry family eloped with a Chinese lawyer she had first met in Paris. They set up house together and notified their families and friends of the fact in an announcement which appeared in the newspapers the following morning. At the time the daughter was officially censured by the elders of the household for repudiating a marriage contract already negotiated by them and she was accused of dishonouring her family. As a punishment she received no dowry. (Waln 1933: 129). Where couples concluded the negotiations themselves, they tended to follow new ceremonial forms which had evolved with the new forms of negotiation.

The most obvious characteristic common to the new form of ceremonial was its simplicity - often ten minutes or so in contrast to the lengthy, densely symbolic and expensive traditional marriage ceremony ordered and paid for by the kin of the parties. Some of those who had come from

Christian-converted families or had been educated at mission schools opted for a Christian ceremony. A few attended the group ceremony of marriage established by the government in the 1930s in which a city or government representative usually officiated. These were established during a national saving campaign in 1935 to reduce the expenses associated with marriage. According to an observer scores or even hundreds of couples bowed three times to the flag and portrait of Sun Yat-sen, twice to each other and once to witnesses, family and friends (Ayscough 1938: 64). However, the majority usually evolved their own individual forms which made no reference to Heaven and Earth, the will of the ancestors, fertility and the provision of descendants or the role of the daughter-in-law in the husband's household. It was rather a contract between two individuals who were to establish their own household based on their mutual regard and congeniality. Several influential marriages set ceremonial precedents. In 1914 Song Qingling and Sun Yat-sen made their vows to each other in the presence of a few friends. Song Qingling wrote to an American friend describing her marriage ceremony as 'the simplest possible, for we both hate surplus ceremonies and the like' (Hahn 1942: 83). Couples began to announce to their friends in person at a small dinner party or by post or in the newspapers that they had signed a marriage contract and had changed their address (Waln 1933: 129; Chao Bu-wei 1947: 193). An example of one of these contracts reads

> 'T.L.K. of Zhili Province and S.J.S. of ZhejiangProvince, having agreed to be married to each other, are today, the 28th day of June 1918, united in wedlock before the Witness T.Y.P. The affections of the two are over-flowing and will continue though their hairs turn gray.'
>
> Signed: T.Y.P., T.L.K., S.J.S., S.C. (Tyau 1922: 72-3)

Other couples arranged a short ceremony at which they had the marriage contract read. The marriage ceremonies between the daughter of a cabinet minister and the son of an ex-governor, which took place in 1918 (Tyau 1922: 71), two returned students at the same time (Tyau 1922: 72) and Chiang Kai-shek and Song Meiling in 1927 (Hahn 1942: 118) illustrate the varying combinations of the old and new symbols. They all include the bowing of the bride and groom to each other and the reading of the contract, but they vary in the degree to which they refer to the Will of Heaven and incorporate the ancestors, kin categories and the go-between. The first example included obeisance to the ancestors and distinguishes the go-betweens, the parents, family elders and other kin from the rest of the guests. The second, more Western-influenced with bridesmaids, groomsmen and the exchange of rings, merely divides the go-betweens and a single category of kin from the guests and the third includes obeisance to the flag and the portrait of Sun Yat-sen and makes no distinctions among the guests. The marriage ceremony was usually followed by a dinner party or light refreshments. The simplification of the marriage ceremony was a symbol of the rejection of the traditional ideological model and it generally had the effect of dramatising the role of the parties. This reduced the importance both of parents and kinship groups previously highlighted in the traditional ceremony and decreased the ceremonial expenses and therefore the dependence of the younger generation on the parental household.

The distribution of free-choice marriage

The new immediate conscious models were practised in the cities and in some provincial towns by certain social categories. They were mainly

adopted by college and high school graduates and returned students from abroad who later entered the professional occupations. But even within these groups many still adhered to the traditional model although their number decreased towards 1949. In 1925 a questionnaire circulated among the readers of a Shanghai newspaper revealed that about half those with a college education considered romantic love the most important consideration in marriage, thus giving it precedence over obedience to parental wishes and the desire to have children; however, only 26 per cent of readers with high school and none of those with elementary school education shared this opinion (Pan Kuan-tu 1934: 135ff). In the mid- to late 1930s Olga Lang found there to be an almost overwhelming rejection of the traditional ideological model among unmarried high school and college students who were asked 'how they wanted their marriage to be arranged'? (See Table 3).

TABLE 3: The Distribution of Conscious Models (a)

	MALE		FEMALE	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Ideological Model:				
Arranged Marriage	2		3	
Immediate models:				
1 Parents initiate, Parties consent	18	3.5	33	6.3
2 Parties initiate, Parents consent	276	54.5	320	67.7
3 Parties initiate, No consent	181	36.6	72	15.0
	677	100	428	100

(Source: Lang 1946: 288)

Despite these preferences she expected to find a gap between their expectations and what actually happened in practice. When she also investigated the marriage patterns of students who were already married, she found there to be a much higher proportion of marriages which had been arranged by their parents. In one sample of 194 married college and high school students, 83 had never seen their brides before marriage and only 40 had chosen their brides for themselves. In another student group of 203 married college and high school students (9 of whom were women) she found the following results (Lang 1946: 122,215):

TABLE 4: The Distribution of Conscious Models (b)

	NUMBERS	PER CENT
Arranged marriage	87	43
Parents initiate, parties consent	53	26
Parties initiate, parents consent	6	3
Parties initiate, no consent	42	21
Not known	15	7
	203	100

She found that among those who were already graduates and were now employed in the government bureaucracy and the professions in Peking and Shanghai, the old ideological model had begun to fall into disrepute, although her samples do seem to have been somewhat small. For example, she reports that only two out of ten engineers and doctors interviewed in Shanghai had had their marriages arranged as in the traditional ideological model, and among 23 families of professional workers, educators and officials in Peking there were 16 cases of 'modern

marriage' (Lang 1946: 124). But despite these small samples, it was certainly among the groups of city students and graduates that the new immediate models were primarily to be found and practised.

In the 1930s, Olga Lang reported that among all other urban social categories from landlords or rich merchants to factory workers, deviations from the traditional ideological model were exceptional rather than the norm. Among the landlords and rich merchants she interviewed there were no modern marriages. In Peking among the middle classes* she found out that nine out of 46 marriages were conducted in a 'modern manner' and in only three out of 112 marriages in eighty-one lower middle and working class** families did the bridegrooms reveal an acquaintance with the new conscious models (Lang 1946: 123-4). Modern marriages, which were exceptional among the industrial workers in Tientsin, were more common among the industrial workers of Shanghai. She found that in 25 per cent of 95 families of industrial workers interviewed in Shanghai there were deviations from the old model, and in the 124 marriages recently negotiated in these families, only 26 were concluded with the consent of the parties (Lang 1946: 124). Despite the contact of the young women industrial workers of these cities with the new ideas, she found the majority to be against modern marriages and very few supported romantic love as a basis of free choice. Rather a majority thought that marriage was still a family affair and that a decent girl

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* 'Middle' classes as defined by Lang include small merchants, owners of small workshops and factories, as well as salaried employees, teachers, clerks and petty civil and military officials.

** 'Working' classes comprise wage earners engaged in manual labour and 'lower middle' classes include workers who do not receive wages or salaries but are paid directly by their customers: e.g. small artisans, rickshaw coolies, peddlers etc.

must accept the mate chosen for her by her parents. Even among the most advanced workers' group in the most Westernised cities of China, the Young Women's Christian Association students in Shanghai, Tientsin and Wuxi, two-thirds of those interviewed said that their marriages would be arranged by their parents. In her investigations among these factory and working groups, Lang was greeted with remarks such as: 'This new idea is something for the rich people like modern dress and umbrellas'; 'Modern marriages are improper'; 'We don't have such things in our native village'; 'As for modern marriages public opinion frowned upon them for it was shameful to choose one's own mate'; 'Children should be married as their parents were' (Lang 1946: 123, 266-7). She concluded that though some of the factory workers might not actually disapprove of the new conscious models, they nevertheless seemed remote from the realities of their own lives.

Ai-Li S Chin, a sociologist investigating attitudes among young people in China in the late 1940s, thought that by this time the process of revolt against the traditional ideological model had spread, beyond the first circle of college graduates, returned students and the residents of the treaty ports, to a second circle of white-collar workers and high school students, and also to the smaller non-westernised towns (1948: 1-2). The field studies conducted in the mid to late 1940s display a range of models. When Morton Fried undertook an anthropological study of a small market town after the end of the anti-Japanese war, he found that among the sons of gentry and those who had been stationed in Shanghai or Zhejiang during the war, the ideas of free marriage were 'quite strong' and that these groups were anxious to be thought of as 'modern' in their ways. These groups and their peers whom they had influenced now insisted that they have a choice in marriage or at least a chance to see and meet

the girl beforehand (1953: 40,58). In a market town in Siquan investigators found in the mid-1940s that the parents still arranged the marriages of their sons and daughters although by this time they counselled with their children in about one third of all cases. A few young couples were known to have initiated their own negotiations, but instances such as these were rare and had aroused immense gossip and criticism (Treadley,1971:155, 267). In West Town, Yunnan province, on the other hand, Francis Hsu found that the choice of marriage partner was almost entirely conducted according to the traditional ideological model. In the last few years there had been cases of broken betrothals and in each case at least one party had been a student. In one case the murder of the betrothed was believed to be the only means available to break the betrothal, and in the other two cases the parties involved had never been able to return to and reside in West Town. Hsu thought that these examples, noted for their deviancy, only seemed to indicate the strength of the traditional norms (1948: 91-93).

In their totality, the illustrations and surveys available for the urban and rural areas in the 1930s and 1940s seem to indicate that while a variety of new immediate models had existed for at least forty years and were certainly increasingly popular among certain social categories, much of the population in the rural areas and even a proportion of those who lived in the treaty ports and who shared in the new education continued to adhere to the traditional model. In both rural and urban areas the balance of socio-economic and ideological forces working for change were far outweighed by those encouraging the persistence of the traditional ideological model. Song Qingling, a reformer in the mid-1920s, summed up the balance of forces at that time. She said that 'the whole weight of traditional forces is against us, traditional intellectual forces,

traditional economic forces, and, in addition, traditional social and family forces' (Dean 1927: 654). Moreover the new conscious models themselves had a weak ideological basis. Although the new conscious models rested on a sufficiently coherent selection of new ideas to provide competition for the traditional ideological model, the new conscious models were vaguely formulated in terms of abstract ideas circulated through the medium of modern schools and in magazines or periodicals largely confined to the metropolitan areas. In contrast to the traditional ideological model which had all the time-honoured teachings and legal sanctions on its side and elaborate rituals and ceremonies prescribing its practice, the new models relied on vague formulations and there were few historical precedents in ideology or social practice.

Obstacles to change

The new ideology of individualism or romantic love were advocated as the 'road to happiness', but it was the map and directions which were missing. When it came to the practicality of the new models the essential problem which revealed itself in a study of letters and biographies is the lack of established alternative behavioural patterns. The autobiographies of those who adopted the new models in the first decades of this century illustrate the anxiety which the lack of prescribed alternatives aroused. For instance, at each stage of the initiation and the conclusion of their marriage negotiations the young students Bu-Wei Chao (1953) and Wei Tao-ming (1943) puzzled out by themselves what they should do. From the beginning to the end of the

negotiations there were no precedents to follow because in their immediate circles the 'thing was unprecedented' (Chao 1947: 77). After Bu-wei Chao and her prospective husband had broken their betrothals (it took them many years), they were ready to get married. 'But,' she asked, 'who should marry us? How should we be married? Who was to give me away? Or should we have a wedding?' (1947: 191). In the absence of an established alternative, another young girl resorted to the unusual tactics of creating chaos in the large household while the horoscopes of her sister and her parentally-chosen mate sat on the family altar. In this way she and her sister hoped that the apparent signs of 'bad luck' would impress upon the household the inauspicious nature of the proposed match (Wong Su-ling, 1953: 131).

Similar problems appear in the letters published in periodicals in the late 1940s. Ai Li-chin concluded from her study of those published in one periodical (West Wind) that for those pursuing the new conscious models there was a vacuum in standards. That is, there was no agreement as to who is a desirable partner and what are permissible or prohibited patterns of behaviour. 'The emancipated young men and women,' she says,

> 'are faced with new unfamiliar situations for which there are no established patterns and no agreed-upon cues, with which to judge or interpret other people's behaviour. This problem extends to the very question of how to find friends of the opposite sex as well as how to behave once acquaintance is made. It is not merely the problem of choice between alternative patterns of behaviour... Case after case shows the petitioner, after stating his particular slant on the marriage question, asking, 'Where can I find a suitable person?' or 'How can I meet friends of the opposite sex?'
>
> (1948: 4)

In the face of conflicting role patterns and no authoritative cues, young people regarded the editors of the progressive periodicals as 'experts' in the new patterns of behaviour and turned to them for support and advice. For instance a clerk in a department store wrote in a letter to West Wind that he had fallen in love with a customer's daughter. For three years he had not dared to speak or write to her. He asked the editor for advice on how to let her know of his love for her. Another young man wanted to know how to express his love for a girl and what is a sign of rejection? In another case a young man wanted to know how to behave while visiting his prospective fiancée (Chin 1948: 4). In response to letters such as these the editors of the magazines published articles to advocate the adoption of the new models and to familiarise their readers with procedures and standards of behaviour appropriate to the new models. A well-known series of articles was published by the Ladies' Home Journal to educate young girls in the choice of marriage partner. One article entitled 'Choosing a Husband' emphasised the importance of investigating with great care the habits and character of the other party and it outlined in some detail the qualities he be sought for in the prospective groom. They included appraisals of his appearance, knowledge, age, occupation, the property at his disposal, kin relations, health, and his attitudes towards marriage, the home and other related questions (Tyau 1922: 73-5). Sometimes editors agreed to intervene in cases of conflict. In one case an editor responded to an appeal by a young girl reader and arbitrated an agreement between her and her parents. Taking advantage of the publicity offered by his pages, he cajoled the older generation into signing an agreement with their daughters wich allowed them to choose their own marriage partner or at the very least provide for their

consent before the conclusion of any betrothal negotiations (Hutchinson 1924: 103-4).

The role of the new periodic press in the spread of new ideas has been well-documented (Chow Tse-tung 1960). Their very reporting of cases of conflict strengthened the resolve of those who adhered to the new conscious models in theory to resist the old in practice. In one case of a suicide on the eve of an arranged marriage, the newspapers reported that they had definite evidence that the girl had been influenced by 'the literature on female emancipation' (Witke, 1967: 143). Another father retorted to his rebellious daughter that what could he expect from her nowadays when all she read was romances in which girls committed suicide simply because they are not allowed to marry the young man of their choice and stories in newspapers about girls breaking with their families because of disagreements with their parents. He thought that since the young people are 'influenced by these novels and newspaper stories it is quite natural that we should have a girl who is dead set against her parents and the rules of propriety' (Hsieh, 1943: 143). But the influence of the editors was limited to those who were literate and in the habit of reading the progressive newspapers and magazines, and though their general attitude might be one of encouragement to youth's struggle against their family, an editor was rarely able to give direct and personal support and penetrate the domestic power structures. Indeed, their very weakness sometimes led them to advocate a compromise solution or personal solutions based on the appropriation of further education or economic independence when the very acquisition of these were reliant on the support of kin networks.

That the new models were adhered to in theory by more of the younger generation than actually practised them was largely due to the

fact that the struggle for freedom of marriage largely represented a rebellion of the younger generation against parental authority. In the ensuing conflict between the two generations there were few sanctions available to the younger generation to defy those in support of the household head. Although the Family Law of 1931 did not prohibit marriage according to the traditional ideological model, it did provide for the first time legal recognition for marriage by free choice conditional upon parental approval. The provision of the code undermined the principle that marriage was a family affair, and thus took from the family head his automatic right to choose his children's mates. Article 972 of the new Civil Code required the consent of the parties concerned before the negotiations could be concluded, but there was no law requiring the end of the betrothal itself or that the marriage contract be signed by the bride and groom. Subsequent legal cases both established the right of a woman to request the law courts to dissolve a marriage contract made by her father on her behalf and made the law applicable to all contracts settled prior to its promulgation (Chiu, 1966: 110). But a major limitation of the new law was its lack of active enforcement, few had access to the means to apply legal sanctions and even more remained ignorant of its very existence (Fei Hsiao-tung, 1939: 81-2).

It was a rare case in which parents did not have the support of local kin and community networks. In case after case reported in the newspapers, letters, autobiographies and village stories, kin and neighbours came to the aid of the parents in advising or threatening the young or in meting out some punishment after the deed was done. The household or kin group formed a reservoir of status, not only advantageous in negotiating marriage alliances among the literate, but

for all households or kin groups vis à vis other members of primary groups based on kin and neighbours. Neighbourhood groups might vary from the single surname villages whose members comprise a single lineage to multi-lineal villages. But whatever the form of the local community, its sanctions, especially in the form of gossip, operated in favour of those who practised the traditional ideological model' and against those deviating from it. Margery Wolf made some enquiries as to just what 'having face' amounted to in a village in Taiwan. She was informed that when no-one was talking about a household you could say it had 'face' (1972: 40). All members of the household and kin group shared in the appropriation or 'loss of face' within their primary groups. It was the lack of sympathy among the immediate face-to-face informal circles which often contributed to the capitulation or the despair of the young and brought about a number of suicides. In one article published in Ta Kung Pao in 1919 which was written on the occasion of a suicide on the eve of an arranged marriage, it was suggested that had the girl in question had access to some kind of support she might not have met with such an untimely death. The article argued that

> '... if neither her parents nor her future in-laws had granted her free will, but there had been in society a very powerful source of public opinion to support her, and there had been some new world where the fact of having been away to seek refuge elsewhere was considered honourable and not dishonourable, then surely Miss Chao would not have died.'
>
> (Witke, 1967: 138)

The question of social ostracism and especially the reaction of young girls in the face of unidirectional social pressure are clearly indicated in the following letter written to a periodical by a boy who had been betrothed since 'before he could walk'.

> 'Some of my friends told me: "Get rid of her now, otherwise you will repent after marriage." But I cannot take this advice. Society does not allow me to take such a step. I have no doubt that I can endure the ostracism of society; but how about her, the poor woman? If I should break the engagement she would feel ashamed. Maybe she would commit suicide.'
>
> (Burgess and Locke, 1945: 52)

The advice and support of peers or of editors of periodicals and lawyers was no match for the kin support and economic sanctions at the disposal of the older generation of the household.

The functions of the household in the economy continued to be such that parents not only had the monopoly of time-honoured teachings and customs on their side, but they could continue to apply economic sanctions in support of the traditional ideological model. Although for Ward (1965) the coincidence of ideological and immediate conscious models of marriage rested mainly on the social prestige or the political authority of the literati, it can be argued that the socio-economic functions of the household or the domestic group made it relevant to all classes. It was even more appropriate to the structure of the household of the majority of the population which seems to have differed from that of the literati in certain fundamental respects. The membership of the literati household frequently included representatives of as many generations as possible selected in one patriline and as many male siblings as possible plus their spouses and all their children. Such a family structure institutionalised maximum proliferation both vertically and horizontally. In comparison, among the peasants and artisans the household might include three generations or frequently the life-span of the individual was such that the nuclear two-generational type was the most common form of residential pattern (Fei Hsiao-tung, 1946; Hsu, 1943). However the structure varied, the household as a common residential group was a recruitment base organised around blood and

marriage ties and a small-scale unit of production and consumption. It was the unit in which resources were pooled and distributed for consumption. The maintenance of the domestic group required at the very least the recruitment and organisation of labour, the powers over which were vested in the senior generation. For these reasons they worked to maintain control over the choice of marriage partner, the timing of marriage and after marriage, they encouraged the dependence and obedience of the young couple on the household. Nowhere was this control more important than among the non-literati who often only had access to the reproductive capacities of one woman of child-bearing age in each generation and did not have the resources to hire labour. They exclusively relied on labour recruited through marriage. It is interesting to note that it was precisely those who lived in the large households of the extended type where these conditions did not hold, who were most likely to adopt the new models.

It was in the interests of the older generation to maintain their controls, and although alternative sources of economic support were increasing, the household and by extension kin groups remained an important base for the recruitment and organisation of labour. For the majority of the population and especially in the rural areas it remained the primary source of economic support. Ironically enough it was often the progressive young students who were especially vulnerable to the ultimate sanction - the withdrawal of economic support. For example, one student wrote a letter to a magazine pointing out that, although his unseen betrothal was illiterate and older than he was, he feared he would not dare break the engagement as he was economically dependent on his father. He thought that he might have done so in different circumstances, but not in the present situation:

> 'My father is a good friend of her father. If I should break the engagement, my father would be very angry. Most probably he would stop my allowance and refuse to pay any tuition for me. In that case I could not study in the school. I do not know what I should do. I have thought about my problem so much that I am sick of it.'
>
> (Burgess and Locke, 1945: 52)

In another case reported in a newspaper a girl refused to enter an arranged marriage and subsequently left home to attend the National Higher Normal School for Girls in Peking. Once she ran away she had no familial economic support and, although girl friends gave her money from time to time to meet living expenses and school fees, she was scarcely able to make ends meet. In the end prolonged hardship was said to have so weakened her that by the winter of 1918 she was stricken with tuberculosis and after hospitalisation died in August 1919 (Witke, 1967: 145). The possibility of such a fate may have discouraged some students from taking just such a step. But if the withdrawal of economic support was the ultimate sanction in the hands of the older generation, it is also significant that those who withstood the forces encouraging the persistence of the traditional ideological model were those who escaped by means of scholarship or employment from the efficacy of both economic sanctions and pressures of local public opinion.

Time and again those who married according to one of the new conscious models had escaped from their home environment. This form of escape was made increasingly possible by the new socio-economic conditions which potentially provided the young with a source of economic support alternative to that of the household unit. The development and expansion of industry and manufacturing and institutions of education had opened up a variety of new employment opportunities ranging from factory and clerical to business and professional opportunities. The spatial distribution of these opportunities and their concentration in

the treaty ports and cities demanded a highly mobile labour force. This encouraged the migration of large numbers of young people to the cities and allowed for the establishment of independent and separate households on marriage (Freedman, 1966: 44ff). These alternative forms of economic support considerably weakened the sanctions at the disposal of the older generation. In community studies it was those who were mobile, beyond the reaches of the sanctions of kin and local community who had adopted the new models in practice. In West Town those who had broken their betrothals sought refuge in nearby towns (Hsu, 1948: 91-3). In Taitou village when the young men of the village migrated to jobs in the cities and divorced their village wives, the bitter criticism of their action was largely ineffectual because the 'real culprits' had placed themselves out of reach and beyond the ties of the old communities and the family rules (Yang, M., 1945: 117). In a survey undertaken in a factory in a provincial town in the 1930s most of the women workers interviewed there said they had taken jobs in order to escape from intolerable family situations and intended to return to their homes only if the conflict was resolved to their satisfaction (T'ien, 1944).

The migration and dispersal of members of the households reached a high point in the 1940s with the anti-Japanese and civil war, the increasing demand for industrial labour, and the deteriorating agrarian conditions due to famine, drought and invasion. Where household members dispersed, the possibility of the household head conducting the negotiations on behalf of the young or the consultation by the young of the older generations was removed, and free-choice by default was forced on the individual. Marion Levy writing in the late 1940s noted that it was often the case that the mobile young lost contact with their families for long periods of time if not completely (1949: 298).

Due to illiteracy and the physical difficulties in communications, he thought that even young people who adhered to the traditional ideological model in principle found that they were forced into a situation in which they had to make decisions for themselves which would formerly have been taken for them by others, and that they had to search for new rationales for their behaviour. Levy terms this new phenomenon 'individualism by default' as opposed to 'individualism by ideal', and he concluded from his observations that, though the mobile had absorbed a certain amount of 'individualism by ideal' as the result of contact with the new conscious models, 'individualism by default' would seem to have been a more effective and widespread solvent of the traditional model than 'individualism by ideal' (1949: 298).

If the new socio-economic conditions provided new forms of economic support and encouraged migration which were necessary for and even encouraged the practise of the new conscious models, in themselves these were not sufficient conditions. Many of the mobile still adhered to the traditional ideological model in practice. In the 1930s and in the 1940s both Lang (1946) and Chin (1948) found that many in college and in the labour force in the industrial cities retained the traditional ideological model on the grounds that it formed the time-honoured customs of their kin and home communities. In some areas of China the new socio-economic conditions had little effect, and over much of Republican China the traditional ideological model remained dominant. None of the new immediate models achieved the status of a new ideological model in Republican China. Rather, the new models were introduced by minority social categories and negatively formulated in terms of deviancy from, or rebellion against, the traditional ideological model. But despite these weaknesses the new conscious models did offer, in

part at least, patterns of social behaviour alternative to the traditional ideological model, and because they were supported by one of the most articulate of social categories who were vociferous in their demand for change, the new conscious models assumed an importance in society far beyond that which might have been warranted by any reckoning of their actual numbers relative to the total population. But it was not until the establishment of a new government in 1949, that a new ideological model was introduced into China which incorporated the principle of mutual volition and provided for and actively encouraged widespread competition and conflict with the traditional ideological model.

CHAPTER 3

THE NEW IDEOLOGICAL MODEL

The new ideological model was initially introduced into China in 1950 when the new Marriage Law outlined and introduced a marriage contract appropriate to the establishment of a socialist society. The drafting of the law was begun in winter 1948-9, eighteen months or so before the law was promulgated. The drafting was undertaken by a number of government departments and organisations and was based on the distillation of the experience accumulated by the Communist Party in the Soviet bases in the previous twenty years, the Marriage Laws of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the social code for the National Republic under Chaing Kai-shek. Several months were also spent in investigating local marriage customs in different parts of China. Chen Shaoyu, Chairman of the Law Compilation Committee, reported that the committee constantly received suggestions and help from the judicial organs of the People's Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice and a number of local judiciaries, the Ministry of the Interior, local civic organisations, women's and mass organisations, and representatives of the national minorities. Altogether, he reported, the process of drafting and redrafting took up to seventeen months before the final version was adopted by the compilation committee (Fu, 1955: 119). In a decree issued by Mao Tse-tung the law was made public and became effective as of 1 May 1950. On that date, the government announced the abolition of all laws upholding the traditional ideological model and the establishment of a new ideological model, the basic principles of which were expressed in the first chapter of the Marriage Law:

> Article 1: The arbitrary and compulsory feudal marriage system, which is based on the superiority of men over women and which ignores the children's interests shall be abolished.
>
> Article 2: Polygamy, concubinage, child betrothal, interference with the re-marriage of widows and the extraction of money or gifts in connection with marriage shall be prohibited.

These basic principles were elaborated in the following chapter of the Marriage Law and numerous educational materials throughout the following fifteen years have discussed and expanded on these principles and provided the details for the operation and study of the new ideological model. Chapter two of the Marriage Law was devoted to contracting a marrage and the fundamental principle on which the new Marriage Law was based was without doubt 'freedom of marriage'. The first article of Chapter 2 noted that:

> 'Marriage shall be based upon the willingness of the two parties. Neither party shall use compulsion and no third party shall be allowed to interfere.'

Subsequent educational materials have clarified what the slogans 'freedom of marriage' ziyou jiehun or 'free-choice' marriage hunyin ziyou entailed. It was normally defined as the provision of full rights for the individual to handle his or her own matrimonial affairs without any interference or obstruction from third parties and without regard for social status, occupation or property (KMRB, 27 February 1957). The same newspaper article described free-choice as the 'fundamental principal on which the new Marriage Law was based, the foundation for the establishment of new family structures and relations, and the weapon for releasing people, especially the women, from the suffering caused by the feudal marriage system'. The new Marriage Law placed the negotiations of marriage within the control of the individual parties for the new marital bond was to primarily rest on the congeniality of the parties.

At each stage of the negotiations of marriage, the details of the new ideological model rest on the exercise of free-choice by the individual parties.

Pre-marital rituals

The new Marriage Law made no reference to betrothal as a procedure of marriage and Article 2 of the Marriage Law expressly prohibited the exaction of money or gifts in connection with marriage. At the time of the passing of the law, Shi Liang, the Minister of Justice, explained that the absence of betrothal in the Communist Law was due to the fact that it was associated with the negotiation and arrangement of marriage by persons other than the parties concerned. It was also symbolic of the power of the head of the household and it was the occasion of payments of money and gifts now banned by the new law (Pang Dunzhi, 1950: 43-8). Since betrothal dingqin or dinghun was often the first step in the chain of marriage prestations it was hoped that its prohibition would encourage the establishment of new marriage customs which did not include monetary transactions. The symbolic character of the payments was also stressed. It was argued that they symbolised a business transaction or a metamorphosed form of marriage by purchase. An editorial in Zhongguo Qingnian stated that 'betrothal gifts' caili were nothing but a pretext for the buying and procuring of women with money and other goods (ZQ, 19 November 1964). The practice was said to have symbolised the exchange of women between groups of men and to have harmed countless numbers of women by reducing their status in society. According to the new ideological model it was not only an outmoded custom in economic terms, but its symbolic meaning was also seen to be irrelevant in the new society based as it was

on the equality of women. Instead, the new ideological model prescribed a period of courtship contributing to the growth of equal and mutual understanding between the bride and groom prior to the marriage ceremony.

In China, with its history of segregation and arranged marriage, courtship had been negatively sanctioned, as was evidenced by the low or almost non-existent institutionalisation of this form of social behaviour. Now the new ideological model positively sanctioned and encouraged courtship, tanqing shuoai or jiao pengyou, as a 'natural, expected and proper prelude to marriage' (GRB, 22 November 1962). Indeed, a period of courtship was viewed as a necessary prerequisite to marriage by self-determination and was therefore seen to be a new and integral part of the marriage procedure. It was therefore a feature of educational materials designed to propagate the new ideological model. In the Zhongguo Qingnian, perhaps the foremost educational forum for young people, it has been stated time and again over the past twenty-five years that courtship was a necessary constituent of the new negotiation process prior to the introduction of new forms of marriage. The main function of courting was said to be the growth of mutual understanding. In 1962 an article, written in response to queries about the proper length and functions of courting, stated that many problems in marriage could be avoided if before a man and a woman got married they thoroughly understood each other. It went on to elaborate on the functions of courtship:

> 'Before a man and a woman get married, they should thoroughly understand each other. From political stand, ideological quality, attitude towards labour and habit of living to disposition, likes and dislikes, one must make a careful analysis and judgement. It is necessary to see whether or not the other party has the same ambition, interest and disposition as one's own and whether or not in the future they can live together and live in happiness. This kind of understanding cannot be

> just reached through impressions gained within a very short time, but it must grow through a comparatively long period of contact and observation. Nor can you depend upon a third person's introduction. It is necessary for you to contact each other directly and know each other. Only mutual understanding, respect and confidence can produce deep love - and then you can talk about marriage.'
>
> (ZQ, 14 September 1962)

A booklet written two years later to advise cadres on new forms of pre-marital behaviour again defined courtship as a necessary process in the development of mutual understanding and romantic love. Moreover, it emphasised that the need to establish courtship as a new custom was 'an absolutely essential stage in procedures leading to new forms of marriage'. A period of sustained contact over a considerable period of time was said to be necessary to facilitate learning to understand one another and therefore young couples were all to be encouraged to court each other openly (Lu Yang, 1964: 19). The new ideological model thus discouraged betrothal and prescribed courtship as a prelude to 'free-choice' marriage. Freedom of marriage or 'free-choice' marriage was also to be distinguished from 'absolute freedom of a marriage' and 'freedom of love', which by implying frivolity and promiscuity were said to be incompatible with the new social system in which individual interests were to be combined with social interests. Therefore, freedom of marriage could only be defined as that freedom which did not harm the interests of others, it could never by 'one's own absolute demand which disregarded consequences for the collective and society' (GRB, 8 March 1958; ZQ, 14 September 1962).

Age of marriage

Article four of Chapter 2 set down the legal ages of marriage. It read that 'a marriage can be contracted only after the man has reached 20 years of age and the women reached 18 years of age'. The new ideological model distinguished between the statutory and appropriate shid ude ages of marriage. The new legal ages contrast with previous legal codes and were an increase of two years over the most recent legal code of the Nationalist Republic, which in 1930 had stipulated that marriage between a male person under eighteen and a female person under sixteen is voidable (Art. 980). The new statutory age of marriage was said to have been worked out by the government as a compromise between the principle of opposing early marriage and the due regard for the consciousness of the population who have long been socialised into practising early marriage. The legal age has been established as the minimum age of marriage and has been contrasted with the appropriate age which is defined as 'the age worked out by the young men and women themselves according to their own circumstances and in full awareness of the advantages of late marriage and the disadvantages of early marriage' (GRB, 7 November 1962).

All the educational materials stress that this is a persuasive campaign of long-term education. It was thought that the undesirable custom of early marriage Zaohun formed over a thousand years would not be eliminated in a short period of time and all the educational materials stress that their aim is to help young people exercise full rights to decide on their own marriage date whether early or late. 'This is a problem of their own and they must handle it themselves.' 'It is absolutely incorrect to look upon love as if it were a criminal act and

penalise lovers or obstruct young people's wedding plans as this would be nothing but a reflection of the feudal concept' (ZX, 3 April 1956). Instead,

> '... it is up to each young person himself or herself to, or not to, get married or to be in love. Provided two people's love is moral, provided they are both willing to get married, and provided their marriage is in accordance with the provisions of the Marriage Law, nobody should normally interfere with or obstruct them. Nor should people discriminate against or jeer at young people who are already in love or who are already married.'
>
> (ZQ, 1 June 1962)

It has often been said in these materials that an alternative to persuasion and education would be to eliminate the custom of early marriage by raising the statutory age of marriage, but the same materials point out that to raise the legal age of marriage would be to raise it beyond the level of awareness or consciousness evident in Chinese society. As one article said, 'If we go beyond the consciousness of the masses by fixing the marriage age, at too high a level, that will also be improper' (GRB, 7 November 1962). The first aim was to raise the levels of awareness and consciousness in order that young people would delay their marriage consciously and willingly. The encouragement of late marriage, wanhun, called for the launching of an educational campaign to associate the appropriate age of marriage with age of physical maturity, age at which education and training is completed, age at which self-support begins and the age at which thoughtful exercise of marital choice occurs.

Now that marriage is to be negotiated on the basis of self-determination and free-choice, young persons are recommended to attain a certain maturity before they could assess the qualifications of their life partners. Young people who are still at school or have just begun

to take part in social labour were said to have very little knowledge or experience of life. It is argued that if a young person is ideologically immature, and if his mind is not firm or his character not fully formed, then he is likely to constantly change his interests and ideology. That is, 'a proposed mate might be ideal today, but not be so tomorrow' (ZX, 3 April 1956). Moreover, young people were thought to be more likely to approach the question of marriage purely on the basis of their feelings for one another. They might subscribe to the ideal of romantic love on the principle that 'love is supreme', liianai zhishang, or the central and main purpose of life. They may think that marriage is a simple affair of self-gratification and provided both sides get along well with one another, then there is no reason why they cannot get married. In other words, they may not take the time to weigh the matter slowly and carefully by appealing to their reason rather than to their own emotions and a kind of love which, based on no profound ideological basis and long-term common goal, is not easily consolidated and developed (Henan ACDWE 1955: 69; ZQ, 6 September 1956). It is only among the older and more experienced age-group that marriage partners were thought to have sufficient understanding of each other's thinking, personality and character to find solutions to practical problems. The educational materials all stress that the older the prospective marriage partners the more likely it is that marriage will be 'approached with a great deal of care and in all seriousness' (GRB, 8 March 1958).

Above all, youth is portrayed as the 'golden age' in an individual's life cycle and a period for acquiring knowledge and skills and for establishing a philosophical view of life. Just as the best moment for making a plan for a day is in the morning, and the best season for making a plan for the whole year is the spring, so the best moments for

formulating life's plan is in youth (ZQ, 10 May 1962). Between twenty and thirty years of age, young people are represented as energetic and vigorous, their brains are at the peak of their performance, their memories most retentive, their imagination the most powerful and their learning efficiency is at its highest levels. They are especially sensitive to new ideas and they can accept new ideas and increase their knowledge quickly. Young people were exhorted to make the best of their youth and concentrate on learning skills and techniques, reading books and seeking truths in order to raise their standards of knowledge and technical levels, and thus lay a foundation for study and work throughout the rest of their lives. Moreover it is claimed an individual's choice of purpose, life-plans and view of the world are all decided during these years. Young people are reminded that they are just like tall buildings erected from the ground upwards. Without the solid foundations laid in an earlier stage of construction and without the efforts of the bricklayers, significant mansions cannot later rise from the ground (GRB, 15 November 1962). When young and energetic youth then have the opportunity to develop their individual skills and political understanding and contribute to socialism, why should they choose early marriage and be tied down to children and household affairs? (GRB, 22 November 1962). Early marriage was thought to direct the precious energy and attention of young persons, and especially young women, away from work and studies and towards the interests of their 'narrow family' and domestic cares.

Many young people have offered their life histories to the media as negative models illustrating the plight of young people who were once energetic and active in studies, at their work, in social activities and in political study and who after marriage have become preoccupied with household chores. Besides young women, students have also been singled

out as a group especially liable to a great burden in the event of early marriage. Students are reminded that the annual expenditure for one university student is equivalent to the fruits of labour of six to seven peasants toiling throughout the whole year (ZQ, 21 July 1962). Many are said to have been initially conscientious, but after marriage they have found it difficult to concentrate in classes and to study after classes and during holidays. They don't get proper rest so that their memory and comprehension faculties decline and their once-good study records decline. As one article warned, 'they would not work so well, their political enthusiasm would fall, they would become indifferent to social work, their relations with the other students would become weaker and weaker and they would gradually lose ground and degenerate' (GRB, 8 March 1958). Rather, students studying in schools were encouraged to make the best use of their lives at a time when they 'were energetic and eager-to-learn and could devote themselves to their studies in an effort to master more knowledge, be concerned with the political life of the country, cherish their own ideals and train and advance themselves in every possible way'. Students were often reminded of the 18th-century Russian scientist Romonosov who withstood the pressures of his father to get married because he thought marriage at nineteen would adversely affect his concentration on and exploration of the world of knowledge (ZQ, 1 June 1962). One national model who had delayed marriage was said to have established the correct priorities for all young people. 'In the past,' she said, 'there was a proverb which said 'found a family and establish a career'. This placed founding a family in front and establishing a career in second place. She felt that young people ought to reverse this order and 'establish a career' first and then 'found a family' (Lu Yang, 1964: 10).

Young people were reminded that the nearer the prospective marriage partners to the legal age of marriage, the less likely they were to be economically independent. Many were still studying and received no wages and those who were in employment were likely to be apprentices or among the less skilled whose income only allows for a little surplus after covering the living expenses of a single person. They were warned that marriage inevitably entails an increase in living expenses, no matter how small the new family may be, and the financial difficulties can often affect family relations and lead to discord. A common example of such difficulties are those of the young couple where the husband is not much over twenty and still studying in senior middle school. In one case the young husband had not the means to clothe himself, to furnish their house or later when a child was born to provide for its well-being. With each practical problem he was forced to turn to his elder brother for help and the result was that he also taxed his elder brother to the extreme. The inadequacy of the basis of self-support is said to be common among young married couples (GRB, 8 March 1958).

Young people are also encouraged to delay their marriage on physiological grounds. The new ideological model introduces sanctions resting on a so-called 'scientific basis'. As one article said, 'We must believe in science, but not in hearsay that has no scientific basis' (Lu Yang, 1964: 30). Generally it is stressed that youth is a period of physical development and bodily growth. Although by the time young men and women have reached the legal age of marriage, their reproductive organs are fully developed, numerous articles have pointed out that they have not yet attained full physical maturity. An old proverb is quoted which says that at 22 and 23 one leaps a little (grows a little in height) and at 24 or 25 one blows a little (grows in strength).

This is said to have some truth, for example the endocrine system of young girls is not fully mature, the process of calcification of the bones will not be completed until 23 or 25 years of age, and the cerebrum is still undergoing a complex process of cerebral building. The complete formation of the epithelial cells of the cerebrum, it was argued, results in the rapid development of the power of thinking, inference, abstraction and generalisation and for this final stage of growth and development to be attained, a youth is required to lead a life of regular rest. Although women enter puberty at 12 to 14 years and men at 14 to 16 years, they only approach maturity at 20, and not until the age of 25 does the body grow to complete maturity. It was only after the various parts of the human body have developed and matured that marriage was to be considered.

A second group of reasons have to do with the claimed impairment to health of excessive sexual activity at a young age. Youth was said to be a time when the sexual impulse is relatively strong and the power of restraint relatively weak. The latter was said to be due to inadequate development of the function of cerebral inhibition often bringing about serious consequences for sexual harmony and harmony of married life and for bodily growth and physical well-being. The examples were given of a man of twenty years whose indulgences in excessive sexual activity affected his central nervous system resulting in neurasthania, low spirits, headaches and discomfort. One boy warned that after his marriage at the age of 15 he had suffered from neurasthania. He had eventually become impotent and felt 'extremely painful mentally and physically'. (ZQ, 12 April 1962).

Generally the age of marriage has primarily been linked to the regulation of fertility and is widely quoted as a means of limiting population growth (Lu Yang, 1964: 30). In the educational materials for

young people there is mention of the benefits of late marriage to society as a whole, but there is more emphasis on the benefits of late marriage to the health of the mother and the child. If children were born to mothers of immature physical development not only the health of the mothers, but also that of the children, would be directly affected. Several eminent physicians have written articles stating that from the standpoint of obstetrics and gynaecology the most suitable age of childbirth was 25 years (ZF, 1 April 1957; ZQ, 21 July 1962). In making this suggestion the women's magazine said that they were directly attacking the popular belief that both conception and delivery of children were more difficult after the age of 20. According to another source, one of the obstacles to raising the age of marriage was overcoming the fear that conception and birth were more difficult for women in their thirties (Chen, 1973: 87).

Problems associated with the early age of women and difficult births have been stressed in the educational materials. Indeed, it was said that approximately half the difficult cases in birth involved 16- to 18-year-old mothers. The old saying that early and too many childbirths are harmful to mothers, that they are 'weak and feeble before they are really old' was said to have a scientific basis (NFRB, 15 May 1962). For instance, if a girl bears a child before she becomes fully mature physically, calcium for example would be extracted from her body to develop the bones of the embryo even before the process of calcification in her own bones is fully completed, it is to the detriment of both mother and child. Although the exact cause of cancer of the cervix and uterus are not known, evidence is cited which suggests to young people that there is a strong link between it and the early age of first births such as 16 to 18 years. For this combination of physiological reasons, marriage

at a later age is recommended. 'Since the advantages of a delay in marriage after reaching the statutory age are numerous, we should encourage late marriage among the broad masses of youth' (GRB, 7 November 1962).

The most appropriate age of marriage, then, is determined according to such conditions as the stage of physical and mental development and the work, labour, study and financial situation of both men and women. Although the advocation of late marriage is linked with the campaign for birth control in articles on population, in the educational materials for young people the benefits are nearly always stated in terms of individual benefits - education, mature choice, physiological development, economic independence - as opposed to national benefits. Underlying the disadvantages of early marriage is the assumption that childbirth will very closely follow on from marriage and it is this which will primarily affect the ideological, educational progress of young people, harm the health of both mother and child and stretch financial resources to their limits. The recommendation of late marriage is usually stated qualitatively in terms of the concrete conditions, advantages and disadvantages, but on several occasions the educational materials have provided quantitative guides and stated the recommended ages of marriage.

Recommended Ages of Marriage in the People's Republic of China

MEN	WOMEN	SOURCE
25-26	23-24	ZQ, 6 September 1956
28-32	22-26	GRB, 28 June 1962
25-29	23-27	ZQ, 12 April 1962
25-29	23-25	ZQ, 21 July 1962
25-29	23-27	ZQ, 9 May 1963
25-30	23-28	Lu Yang, 1964, p.28

These figures are well above the legal age of marriage; the minimum recommended ages of marriage have not noticeably increased over the years, although there has been a gradual increase in the upper limits. There is some difference in the recommended ages for men and women. The average recommended age for men is 28 to 29 which is three to four years older than the average age of 25 recommended for women, which may suggest a recommended age difference of approximately three years between spouses. What is perhaps the most impressive factor about these figures is the breadth of their range. The range for women being a total of seven years between 22 and 28 years of age and for men a total of eight years between 25 and 32 years of age. This width of range may possibly be accounted for by the variation in appropriate ages given for young people in urban compared to rural areas. It is general policy that people in the cities must be urged to marry even later than those in the countryside (SWB, 20 November 1974), and more recent figures given to visitors in China suggest that a range of 23 to 25 in rural areas and 25 to 28 in urban areas is the ideal (Keeson, 1975: 19; Johnson, 1976: 45). This difference is also reflected in the ages of role models. For instance, Weng Yujiao and Wen Jinxiu who are village girls delayed their marriages until they were in their late twenties (ZQ, 1 August 1964; RMRB, 12 June 1973) compared to factory worker Yi Shizhuan who was 33 years at marriage (ZF, 1 June 1963).

Choice of marriage partner

Article 5 of the Marriage Law goes on to define the prohibitions limiting the field of eligible mates. A field of eligible mates can be defined by the operation of two principles, that of incest avoidance and

ethnocentric preference. It is the balance of each which determines the composition and breadth of an individual's range of potential spouses. The new ideological model introduced on a nation-wide scale in 1950, theoretically removed as many restrictions as possible from the marriage field in order to establish a broad field of eligible mates and increase the range of choice for each individual. The marriage prohibitions as outlined in the Marriage Law reduced the number of kin restrictions in a society which was often taken as an anthropological example of a society where the field of eligibles was determined largely by the principle of incest avoidance. Article 5 stated that where the men and women were lineal relatives by blood or where the man and woman were brother and sister born of the same parents or where the man and the woman are half-brother and half-sister, marriage is prohibited. The question of prohibiting marriage between collateral relatives by blood within the fifth degree of relationship is to be determined by custom.

The first section of the article represents a much reduced field of prohibitions in a society where the number of prohibitions was so large that surname exogamy was the rule. Previously a person was forbidden or at least discouraged from marrying another of the same surname no matter how distant the relationship or different the zu or lineage. Since the number of surnames has been estimated as approximately 500, this rule succeeded in substantially circumscribing the field of eligibles. By the new Marriage Law of 1950 the exogamous group is to consist of direct lineal blood relatives, but in contrast to the Ching dynasty (1644-1911) and Nationalist Civil Codes (1930), affines are exempt from this rule. Similarly collateral relatives by marriage were not included in the list of prohibitions. As to prohibiting marriage between collateral relatives by blood beyond the range of brothers and sisters born of one or both parents but within the

fifth degree of relationship,* the question was to be determined by custom. This concession to custom is probably designed to accommodate the cross-cousin marriage.

Within the prohibited five generations on the maternal side an exception was made from Ching times for the marriage between biao cousins of different surname such as children of mother's brother and father's sister. These biao cousins, as opposed to cousins of the same surname or tang cousins, were permitted to marry, and it seems may have been encouraged to marry in various historical periods and in certain geographical regions of China (Zhongyang Renmin Zhengfu 1950: 98-102). In educational materials published after the promulgation of the new Marriage Law, Chen Shaoyu and Li Zuyin argued that biao cousin marriage was now allowed and that there was no need to maintain the prohibitions against intermarriage between collaterals. Socio-economic conditions would increasingly remove the conditions encouraging biao cousin marriage and in the meantime the matter could be left to custom (Meijer 1971: 167; Chang Fan, 1952: 39-41, 58-66). The remainder of the prohibitions are to do with medical disabilities which might render a person unfit for marriage. Those specifically categorised as such include the sexually impotent, those who suffer from venereal disease, mental disorder and leprosy.

The concept 'freedom of marriage' included the freedom of each person to select or choose a spouse zhao duixiang unhindered by traditional socio-economic criteria. 'Freedom of choice' meant not only that an

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* The term five generations or wu fu includes four generations of paternal and maternal ascendants, four generations of ego's own descendants, and five generations of the descendants of the ascendants mentioned (Meijer, 1971: 166).

individual might voluntarily marry according to his or her own choice and without unreasonable interference from others, but also that this choice should not be bound by race, social status, occupation or property (KRMB, 27 February 1957). The government planned to broaden the field of eligible marriage partners not only by reducing the number of prohibitions, but also by abolishing socio-economic criteria as a factor governing choice of marriage partner. The field of preferential mates is not defined in the law, but is discussed at length in the numbers of educational materials published since its promulgation.

Within the field of eligibles, desirable or preferential mates were defined according to their state of political consciousness. According to the new ideological model, ideal partners were politically compatible and in ideological agreement zhitong daohe (literally to be of one mind and purpose) (Henan ACDWF, 1955: 29-36; Song Tingzhang, 1957: 9-16). This criterion for selecting a spouse, xuanze airen di biaozhun, was expressed in a variety of ways. As one article said of the new standards in selecting a spouse, he or she must be 'industrious in production and advanced in ideology' (P'S C, 1 December 1952). 'In choosing a life partner,' said another, 'the fundamental thing is to have a common interest in politics as well as in ideology.' It went on to say that it is the quality of political thinking and attitudes towards labour that are important (ZQ, 16 June 1963). A booklet written to advise on these matters stated that the most important condition is the character of the person; finding out whether he/she shares the same political standpoint, ideological views, class sentiments and revolutionary ideals. Therefore there is a need to understand clearly the person's political viewpoint, attitude towards work, style of life and quality of thinking (Lu Yang, 1964: 115).

The preface to a booklet published in the same year and entitled Between Husband and Wife again stressed that the individual parties to the marriage contract should 'respect and love each other' and that this should be the exclusive basis of their relationship. 'In a socialist society', it said

> 'love between a husband and wife is built on common political thinking and on the foundation of struggling together for the revolutionary cause. The relationship between husband and wife is first of all comradeship and the feelings between them are revolutionary. By revolutionary is meant that politically he should take her as a new comrade-in-arms, in production as well as in work, he should take her as a class sister and labour together, at home he should regard her as a life companion, besides that a couple should respect and love each other, help each other, and encourage each other so as to achieve progress together.'
> (ZF, 1 October 1964)

All the definitions have in common the emphasis on the partner's lichang (standpoint) or shijie guan (literally 'world outlook') or political attitudes defined in the broadest possible sense, and make no reference to their socio-economic characteristics.

The omittance of socio-economic characteristics is in direct contrast to the traditional ideological model in which marriage restrictions were also based on differences in social status. After 1911 the law no longer prohibited marriage between persons of certain classes or social status, but despite this legal change, village studies in the 1930s and 1940s suggest that the families negotiating a marriage continued to be guided by the maxim of matching doors. From 1950, preferential mates were not only left socially undefined, but the new ideological model specifically rejected socio-economic dimensions of preference. A passage from Engels was often quoted in support of this aspect of the new ideological model. In The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State he pointed out that:

> 'Full freedom in marriage can become generally operative only when the abolition of capitalist production, and of the property relations created by it, has removed all these secondary economic considerations which still exert so powerful an influence on the choice of partner. Then no other motive remains than mutual affection.' (1954: 77 in RMRB, 13 December 1963)

This ideologically prescribed field of eligibles, disregarding as it did previous socio-economic restrictions and divisions in society, established a theoretically broad field of eligibles. As one article pointed out, 'now there is sweet grass everywhere' (ZQ, 16 June 1963). The new unrestricted marriage market was intended to offer an increasingly wider choice of mates, particularly for those previously disadvantaged in the marriage market for socio-economic reasons.

The marriage ceremony

Article 6, the last in Chapter 2 of the Marriage Law, provided for the validation of the marriage contract through registration:

> 'In order to contract a marriage, both the men and the women should register in person with the people's government of the district or township in which they reside. If the proposed marriage is found to be in conformity with the provisions of this law, the local people's government should, without delay, issue marriage certificates.'

Both parties were instructed to proceed in person to the local street office in towns or brigade or commune office in the rural areas with the relevant documents showing name, age, marital status and occupation. There they were acquainted with the legal conditions of marriage and provided with a marriage certificate. This marriage certificate furnished conclusive proof of marriage and the couple were henceforth recognised as man and wife in the name of the law and their rights and interests protected. This was the first time that individual marriages had obtained the legal recognition of the political authority or the state. There is no provision in the 1950 law for a further ceremony, and whether or not a marriage ceremony is held after registration is said in educational materials to be very much up to the two parties themselves. A booklet published in 1964 reminded readers that it is unnecessary to have any kind of marriage ceremony, jiehun yishi, once the marriage certificate is issued, for it obtains the legal recognition of the state and they

are henceforth considered legitimately husband and wife. It pointed out that a public ceremony of the traditional kind does not further legitimise the marriage in the eyes of the political authority, but it went on to say that it is also recognised that as it has been customary to perform some kind of ceremony, there may still be some necessity to allow for formal social recognition in addition to the new political recognition (Lu Yang, 1964: 35).

The new ideological model recommended that the social recognition of marriage take the form of a simplified ceremony in which the couple proclaim themselves to be man and wife in the presence of their friends and family at an evening party at which light refreshments were served. The new model disregarded the customary practices of choosing auspicious days, huangdao jiri, the traditional sequence of rites of separation from the bride's natal family and integration into her husband's family, the transfer of the dowry, jiazhuang, and the celebration of the marriage feast, bai jiuxi, at which an exclusive list of guests was invited to attend and proffer their gifts. What is advocated is a curtailment of the traditional ritual with the elimination of symbols which were said to take their meaning from the superstitions and extended kin relations of the old society and a reduction of marriage expenses to end the financial dependence of the young people on their parents. The educational materials in support of the new model assumed that the advantages of economy and simplicity would be self-evident once the repercussions of the expenses and the significance of many of the symbols for social relations were explained and understood.

A strategy for reform

The reform of the marriage system has been described as 'a constant and serious political task' (P's C, 1 June 1952), and it has been based on a dual strategy to promote the new ideological model and create new socio-economic conditions appropriate to free-choice marriage. Initially, in 1950, the

main aim of the government was to introduce the new ideological model as a universal measure of social behaviour and to familiarise every household in urban and rural areas with the details of the new ideological model (P's C, 1 June 1952). For each stage of the negotiations of marriage, the new law had established the principles on which the new ideological model was based and the specific guidelines for the implementation of the new ideological model in practice were elaborated and publicised in educational forms. The promulgation of the law and publishing of educational materials were immediately followed by the organising of government personnel and the leaders of the Women's Federation, the peasants' and students' organisations and the Trade Unions, at both national and local levels, to make a detailed and systematic study of the law in order to understand how the new ideological model differed from the old ideological model. Once they had grasped the significance of the new marriage and family system they were to popularise the details of the new model in small study groups and in the media. All aspects of the media were marshalled in their support. There were articles in the press, periodicals, wall newspapers and it was featured in films, drama, local theatrical performances, rhymes and songs. It was the subject of lectures in schools, winter-schools for peasants, and factory classes, travelling exhibitions were organised and the radio constantly broadcast discussions of it. The Women's Federation and the East China Publishing House, for example, co-operated to produce comic strips, drawings, popular stories and songs and pictorial charts. In 1951 they organised an exhibition based on the Marriage Law. It was held in Shanghai and attracted an estimated 260,000 visitors in ten days and in Zhejiang a similar exhibition was visited by 10,000 people in the first five days (NCNA, 27 October 1951).

Investigation teams were organised throughout the country to report on progress in education and in the implementation of the law. At first the reports of progress in the media were encouraging, but they had principally come from the major cities and their immediate suburbs where the majority of the population was often already familiar with new marriage and family systems and legislative procedures. The first signs of the many problems that were to appear were revealed in reports and letters in the press towards the end of 1950 which reported individual cases of violations of the new law (RMRB, 29 September 1951; 9 October 1951). These first reports soon led to many others and it was found that the irregularities were by no means confined to isolated cases, but were widespread. This was reported to be particularly so in the rural areas where the new concepts of freedom and choice and equality were directly introduced for the first time. In 1951-2, Shi Liang, the Minister of Justice, estimated that in only three out of 2,086 xian or counties of China was the new ideological model a widely accepted form of social behaviour. The same article reported that in East and Central-South China, for example, free-choice marriage and other marriage reforms had gained little or no acceptance with the public. In the whole of the North-West and even in certain parts of otherwise advanced provinces like Zhejiang and Shandong, the marriage reform had left the old customs unaffected (RMRB, 4 July 1952). It was this persistence of old ideas and apparent misconceptions about the new ideological model which caused the government to once again plan an intensive and nation-wide campaign to familiarise the people with the details of the new forms of marriage.

The government decreed that March 1953 was to be set aside for a special family-by-family and street-by-street campaign to conduct education in the new forms of marriage. The Vice-Chairman of the

Commission Leading the Campaign explained the significance and purpose of the campaign as a period of intensive publicity and discussion to enable everyone to clearly demarcate the differences between the old and new marriage systems and to eliminate the influence of the social customs within the consciousness of the people (RMRB, 20 March 1953). The preparation for the campaign began in earnest in January and February of 1953 and several teams of social investigators were sent out to make a practical study of the problems involved. In numbers of sample villages, factories and urban neighbourhoods experiments were carried out to identify the problems likely to be encountered in each area and the most useful methods of work to rectify problems discovered (CR, September 1953). Once the Marriage Law team arrived in a village or district, the movement to reform the marriage system tended to pass through three stages. The first was the training of local cadres. The success or failure of the campaign was found to depend on the extent of the cadre's own familiarity with and training in implementing the law (RMRB, 19 March 1953). The peripatetic work teams usually held local conferences for training cadres which lasted about four and a half days and explained the nature, policies, aims and methods of the Marriage Law campaign. In one rural subdistrict in Siquan province, of the 160 village administrators, functionaries of the peasants' and women's associations and members of the Communist Party and Youth League, at least half were found to be influenced by the old ideological model (CR, September 1953). Once the cadres were acquainted with the details of the new ideological model and understood the critique of the old ideological model, they were to inform, educate and explain the general outlines of the Marriage Law to the people.

Cadres were urged to adopt a repertoire of plays, ballads, lectures and exhibitions to familiarise the people with the principles of the law before organising the different social categories into discussion groups. The older generation, mothers, wives, husbands and the youth were all encouraged to meet separately to discuss the differences between the old and new ideological models in direct conjunction with their own experience. In one village in Hebei province, the young women met separately several times to study and discuss the Marriage Law. On the third occasion the woman leader of the peripatetic Marriage Law team suggested that each woman speak from her own experience and compare the old and new ideological models with the customs or immediate models of their small village. 'Let us speak today,' she said, 'from our own experience, let us speak of our own individual problems, then we can see if old feudal ideas are still holding any of us prisoners and how we can deal with the matter.' Several of the women began to speak of their own problems and the group concluded that the influence of the old ideological model still affected their own perception of the marriage system. The village was a tightly-knit neighbourhood community where it was said 'each family knows quite well what the other one thinks on all important subjects' (P's C, 1 March 1953). For instance ever since childhood it was known that marriages were arranged, or a divorced or remarried woman was regarded with contempt in the village. Despite their acquaintance with the new model, the older generation still shook their heads and sighed with disapproval at those who dared to claim their rights under the Marriage Law. Even the leaders of the new organisation, such as the Women's Federation, were found to be still influenced by the old ideological model.

The third stage involved the selection of local role models or the publicisation of the cases of those who had claimed their rights under the new law and the establishment of organs to provide support for those adopting the new ideological model and to arbitrate disputes in the future. In providing new organisations of support and establishing a system of marriage registration, the government was aiming to provide a power base alternative to that of the domestic group and the local village elders. It forecast that the authority of the household head could only be sustained in the family if it had the total support of the local community and once an individual defying family authority could be given alternative support, the power of the household head to control the marriage negotiations would be broken. To provide sanctions in support of the new ideological model the government broke with its custom of non-interference or non-intervention in the domestic sphere. Government cadres were encouraged to think of love, marriage and family life as serious problems for collective concern and not as the private affairs of the individual which were of no concern to the government. They were to reverse the old adage that 'even an upright magistrate does not interfere with family affairs' (Smith, 1902: 292). Many articles were written which exhorted cadres and government and popular organisations to concern themselves with marriage and the affairs of the domestic group.

At the conclusion of this third phase of the campaign, it was estimated that overall it had effectively acquainted a high proportion of the population, perhaps as many as 70 to 80 per cent of the country's population, with the details of the new model. But it was also recognised that the campaign had been somewhat uneven in its influence in all these areas (P's C, 16 November 1957). The educational campaigns of the first few years constituted a period of initial experimentation in introducing

the principles of the new marriage system to the population at large and at their conclusion they had certainly acquainted the majority of the population with the principles of the new Marriage Law. They had introduced a new ideological model to compete with the old ideological model. However, the experience of the crash policy in the first three years had also suggested that education in the principles of the Marriage Law would take some time and should continue on a regular and universal basis (CR, September 1953; NCNA, 5 March 1955). Since the introduction of the new marriage system was largely aimed at replacing the accepted and shared thought systems within the consciousness of the people, its methods were primarily to be those of education and persuasion. Thus, the specific guidelines for the establishment of new marriage patterns have been constantly and consistently elaborated and publicised in the media from 1953 to the present day.

In the early 1950s the government had also deliberately made the conclusion of land reform policies a necessary precondition to a full campaign publicising the Marriage Law, in the belief that the redistribution of a share of land to each individual member of rural households would provide a source of economic independence for the younger generation, and especially for women. This would improve their bargaining position in any conflict with the older generation over the control of the marriage negotiations. In the mid-1950s the government embarked on a new set of policies to socialise the ownership of the means of production and reorganise production, which would have the effect of substituting individual peasant producers by collectivised units. It was anticipated that these new measures would reduce the economic functions of the domestic group which had previously encouraged the head of the household to control the negotiations of marriage or exchange of women in the

interests of the domestic group. The new policies to transform the mode of production were designed to remove the property basis and the economic functions of production and consumption from the domestic group. In rural areas the introduction of mutual aid teams, co-operatives and communes and the establishment of joint state-private enterprises, co-operatives and neighbourhood factories in urban areas, were all designed to reduce the significance of domestic group as the unit of production and collectivise the ownership of production. Collective ownership would remove the functions of the household to dispose of family properties, to recruit and organise production and supervise consumption. Instead, private properties would be reduced to a minimum, labour would be collectively organised and recruited according to age, experience and physical strength rather than on the basis of individual households, and individual members of the household were to be provided with their independent sources of economic support. It was anticipated that the establishment of collective services (such as dining facilities, child care, laundry, sewing and mending and other services) would mean that a larger part of consumption would be removed from the individual household. By reducing the functions of the household in the economy, these policies would, it was claimed, provide the material conditions for 'free-choice marriage' and eliminate familial control of the negotiations and choice of partner according to socio-economic criteria.

Both economic policies and the substitution of one ideological model for another were designed to complement each other within a dual strategy working towards the same end - the establishment of new marriage procedures and patterns. It has been increasingly common to debate the implementation of policies in China in terms of cyclical or circular patterns of left and right or moderate and radical oscillations

(Winckler, 1969; 1976). An examination of the policies to do with marriage does not argue for the repetition of a well-defined single stereotyped cycle, rather they can be distinguished by the almost constant flow of educational materials directing attention to some aspect of the new ideological model. It is possible, however, to correlate a greater flow of educational materials during 'right' or 'moderate' periods as opposed to the 'left' or 'radical' phases. During the former, as in the Socialist Education Movement of the early 1960s, marriage received greater attention in the media as a result of debates surrounding such questions as the place of the individual and individual happiness in a revolutionary society. In fact much of the material cited in the present study is drawn from this period.

There have been two exceptions to the general emphasis on education, and these have both occurred in 'left' or 'radical' periods. During the Great Leap Forward (1958-59), there was more attention given to the economic strategy to do with the reorganisation of the relations of production and the reduction of the role of the household as a unit of production and consumption which were designed, among other goals, to have direct effects on the reform of the marriage system. The Cultural Revolution, on the other hand, was much more concerned with the re-arrangement of social strata and class relations, and although the policies seldom directly encompassed those to do with marriage and domestic and kin groups, they certainly had repercussions for all of them. Since the Cultural Revolution, and especially in the recent movement to criticise Confucius and Lin Piao, the flow of educational materials has resumed, although in much reduced numbers. Perhaps this reduction is due to the continuing absence of the magazines Zhongguo Qingnian, Zhongguo Funu and Gongren Ribao which formed popular channels for the educational materials before 1966.

As a result of the shifting priorities within this dual strategy, both ideological and economic variables will be shown to have intervened in the competition between the old and new ideological models to produce syncretic forms which distinguish the immediate conscious models of different sub-groups in Chinese society today. The next chapters set out to identify the variety of these immediate models which characterise the negotiation of marriage, the choice of marriage partners, the age of marriage, and the ceremonial and ritual forms which the marriage procedures take.

CHAPTER 4

THE INITIATION OF NEGOTIATIONS

The substitution of parentally-arranged marriage fumu baoban ernu hunyin by marriage of self-determination or free-choice marriage hunyin ziyou brought the new ideological model into direct confrontation with the traditional ideological model and out of this competition and conflict have arisen a number of syncretic immediate conscious models throughout China. An examination of the social behaviour and role expectations exhibited in the case studies reveals the operation of at least four immediate conscious models, two coinciding with the old and the new ideological models and two involving combinations of elements of the old and new ideological models.

Figure 3: The Range of Conscious Models in the People's Republic of China

	INITIATIONS OF NEGOTIATIONS	CONSENT	CONCLUSION OF NEGOTIATIONS
Old ideological model (1)	Parents	-	Parents
Immediate conscious model (2)	Parents	Parties	Parents
Immediate conscious model (3a)	Parties	Parents	Parents
(3b)	Parties	Parents	Parties
New ideological model (4)	Parties	-	Parties

The models can be distinguished according to the patterns of authority and controls which they exhibit. They range from model (1) in which the negotiations, from their initiation to their conclusions, are entirely monopolised by the elder generation or parents to model (4) where the controls are exclusively operated by the parties to the marriage

negotiations. Models (1) to (4) may therefore be placed on a continuum between the two poles of ideological construction according to the degree of parental participation in the negotiation of marriage. There is evidence that this range of patterns of control have characterised and continue to characterise immediate conscious models in the People's Republic of China.

There is some reason to believe that model (1), or arranged marriage of the traditional ideological model, with very few modifications, continued to operate in Chinese society after 1949. A number of case studies display a parental monopoly of controls of the marriage procedures. That is, the older generation initiate the negotiations and conclude the marriage arrangements without consulting with, or requesting the consent of, the principle parties. The negotiations which they undertook consisted of selecting a likely spouse, fixing the amount of the betrothal gift and the date of the ceremony. The negotiations were normally conducted through a third person, sometimes a professional go-between, but more often by a member of kin or a neighbour who have offered their services. The go-betweens are usually given the name of jieshao ren or 'introducers' to distinguish them from the traditional brokers or go-betweens whose services were not outlawed. A number of letters and broadcasts show that young people, even in the 1970s, suddenly find that their marriages have been arranged without their prior knowledge.

In 1963, for example, two letters were written to magazines by young people whose marriages had been arranged in this manner. One young girl returned home to work in the countryside after graduation from primary middle school to find that her mother had initiated marriage negotiations with the prospective groom's family. The young people were not consulted and, despite the girl's expressed fears that she had never

met, and that she knew nothing of the prospective groom, her mother proceeded to finalise the marriage negotiations (ZQ, 26 November 1963). Another young girl suddenly found that she had been betrothed for six years and that the marriage arrangements were due to be concluded in the near future - all without her knowledge, let alone her consent (ZF, 1 February 1966). The newspaper Anwhei Daily reported a case as recently as in March 1974 in which a young girl was betrothed without her knowledge. The negotiations had been conducted by a matchmaker and with the approval of her parents. The young girl said she was shocked when she first learned of the news and returned home at once to reject this marriage arrangement. She met with no response from her parents, who said that they adhered to the old maxim that 'the parents' orders must be obeyed and the words of a matchmaker must be heeded'. In this belief the parents proceeded to prepare for the marriage ceremony and disregarded both their daughter's wishes and the opinions of some of the local commune members. After consultation, the families of the bride and groom agreed to hold the wedding on 15 December 1973. On that day the groom's family used every possible means to take the struggling bride to the home of the bridegroom (SWB, 21 March 1974). The case studies in which this model, more or less intact, persists are relatively few and they are almost entirely taken from the rural social field where they are the occasion of conflict between the younger and older generations.

The second immediate model incorporates characteristics of the old and new ideological models. In the relevant case studies the parents take it upon themselves to initiate the marriage negotiations and the terms are agreed much as in model (1), but the parties are also introduced to each other and the conclusion of the marriage agreement is dependent upon their consent. Parents no longer have the monopoly of

the negotiations. The case studies which illustrate these marriage procedures usually begin with the parents' search for suitable mates. As young people approach marriageable age, parents approach kin, friends and neighbours and in rare instances employ professional brokers to aid them in the search for a suitable mate and in conducting the preliminary negotiations leading to a proposal of marriage, qiuhun. A tentative choice, or in rare instances a short-list of suitable candidates (e.g. CR, September-October 1953), is presented to the son or daughter to solicit their opinions and consent. This stage of the procedure seems to be no mere formality. In one village study conducted in 1970, one set of parents involved in marriage negotiations considered several prospective mates for their son and several times the match seemed very suitable in every respect, but each time the negotiations were abruptly ended when the young people turned down the idea as the result of prior knowledge of the partner from schooldays, reports of mutual acquaintances or as the result of a meeting. In one case the couple who had been school mates turned down the match and in another case in the same village, the school teacher and her prospective partner had several talks together and it was said that she put him through several tests before giving her consent to the match (Chen, 1973: 72-86). That the consent of the young people was an institutionalised prerequisite to the conclusion of the negotiations in model (2) is evidenced by the great disappointment or even helpless anger expressed by parents if that consent was not forthcoming. The parents of one girl found an acceptable suitor for their daughter through the introductions of an elderly woman neighbour. To their fury the daughter rejected not only him, but a number of very desirable partners including an army officer, a cadre and a technician. They were each rejected in turn. Although the parents were very angry,

it is noticeable that they did not consider either the use of coercion or proceeding on their own initiative to the conclusion of the negotiations (ZF, 1 May 1964).

In contrast to the previous two models, in the third immediate model the young people themselves took the initiative in the negotiation of marriage, ask for their parents' consent, and the marriage arrangements are concluded either by the parents and/or the principal parties. Where the younger generation took over the initiation of marriage negotiations, the negotiation process took on a new form. The principals usually came to a decision to marry after a period of courtship. Third persons played a much less conspicuous role. Young people might continue to be and usually were informally introduced to each other by workmates, friends or relatives, and there are a number of cases where government organisations are reported to have intervened and played 'matchmaker' to couples who have been shy or fearful of openly admitting their initial affection for one another. For example, in some cases young couples were reluctant to express their affections because they either feared ridicule or were anxious about the likely opposition to their match. In these cases, leaders of the women's organisations or Youth League or Party cadres might give them encouragement and provide the opportunities for them to openly advertise 'their relationship' (e.g. WC, March 1962; ZF, 1 January 1966). The conclusion of the negotiations might take either of two forms. In some cases parents take over and conclude the negotiations as in models (1) and (2) by settling the form of exchange between the two families. In other cases the parties, or the parties and parents combined, might disregard traditional procedures and arrange the ceremony as in the new ideological model (see Chapter 8). In any event it is the

control of the initial negotiations by the parties which primarily differentiates this model from others.

Despite the fact that in many of the case studies illustrating model (3) parents might bring considerable pressure on their sons and daughters to marry, they did not themselves proceed and initiate the negotiations on the behalf of the young people. Rather, parents accepted the right of the younger generation to choose their own marriage partners, and even in cases where the young people were to delay the decision for some years, the parents did not seek to take the initiative and conduct negotiations on their behalf. What parents do seem to have expected, though, was that they had the opportunity and right to give their consent and that this was viewed as a necessary prerequisite to the conclusion of the negotiations. Letters to the media indicate that some couples who were wishing to marry were worried by the fact that their parents disapproved of the match and were withholding their consent. In these cases the refusal of consent by the parents was often enough to cause either or both of the young people to doubt the wisdom of the match and contemplate the breakup of the negotiations. The parents of one girl strongly opposed their daughter's decision to marry a cadre who worked in a government office. At first the girl was not unduly worried by her mother's attitude, for she thought that her mother would surely see reason and come round to giving her consent with time. But after a short interval her mother was still vehemently of the opinion that the match was not suitable and accused her daughter of ingratitude. These accusations had the effect of causing the girl to doubt the wisdom of the match; she said she 'had the feeling of being in a dilemma' and began to feel anxious and depressed and uncertain about whether she should proceed with her plans (NFRB, 12 May 1962). In the case of another young

couple planning to marry, the refusal of the girl's parents to give their consent caused to boy to think that the relationship between them had come to an impasse and he himself began to contemplate the breaking off of the negotiations (ZQ, 27 November 1962). Both the initiation of the negotiations by the parents and the consent of the parties (model 2) and the initiation by the parties and the parental consent (model 3) indicated a degree of shared control of the marriage negotiations. In model (4) the marriage negotiations are exclusively controlled by the parties themselves.

The last immediate conscious model, model (4), coincides with the new ideological model introduced on a nation-wide scale in 1950. In this model the parties to the marriage initiate the negotiations for marriage, allow no obstruction or intervention of the older generation to stand in their way and, despite the withholding of parental consent they proceed to conclude the negotiations themselves. Most of the role models or public reference groups selected for educational materials fall into this category. The case of Chen Meiying was published in the women's magazine Zhongguo Funu to illustrate the new ideological model and to remind the readers that the struggle for freedom of marriage is in effect one between the old and new ideological models. Chen Meiying chose her own marriage partner after a period of courtship, but her decision met with combined opposition from the members of her family and particularly from her father. The long drawn-out struggle which followed only served to strengthen the resolve of Chen Meiying and her partner to conclude their marriage arrangements themselves. When finally the parents, as a requisite to the bestowal of their consent, began to impose conditions on the young couple such as the amount and constituents of the betrothal gift which they knew the groom couldn't possibly meet, the young couple

disregarded their opinions and demands. Their marriage took place not at home with the support of the older generation, but at the factory where they both worked and only afterwards were their parents informed of the event (ZF, 1 October 1963). What the case studies which reveal this sequence have in common is that the older generation were usually informed that the negotiations had been concluded after the event, and at the ceremony itself the young couple were often praised for adhering to the new ideological model or holding the 'correct viewpoint in choosing life's companions, for daring to fight against the old thinking and for the way in which they had handled their wedding arrangements' (ZF, 1 October 1963). The history of their negotiations were often circulated in the media to encourage their peers to defy opposition and practise the new ideological model.

The distribution of models

Any attempt to evaluate the distribution or degree of adherence to any one model is handicapped by the fragmentary nature of the figures available and the vagueness of definition which underlies their categorisation. The figures available have been assembled in Appendix 4, but it is immediately clear that statistics such as these can hardly form the basis of any comparison either according to area or time period. The figures for arranged marriage refer to the operation of model (1), but the figures for free-choice marriage can refer to any of models (2), (3) or (4). The figures predominantly refer to the years immediately following the introduction of the Marriage Law, and the fact that the figures fluctuate wildly and there is no apparent pattern probably reflects misrepresentations of the categories. But even if the statistics were

useful, there is no means of assessing the relative weight of the controls operated by parents and parties within the category of 'free-choice'. In the absence of national statistics, it has been necessary to rely on impressionistic data collected over a period of time from a number of sources. There is a remarkable degree of coincidence in these sources in favour of models (2) and (3). These two syncretic models seem to represent a high proportion of the selection procedures. All the available evidence suggests that model (2) determines most role expectations and therefore social behaviour in rural areas and model (3) represents the most common procedure in the urban social field.*

It was stated at the end of the first campaigns for marriage reform that in most rural areas, the marriage system was at the stage of 'individual decision and introduction by others or semi-voluntary in form' (Kan, 1965: 4). One report in the mid-1950s stated that in the great number of villages, the people stand at the stage of social revolution where marriage is arranged through the introduction of another person. The report went on to estimate the proportions for one province, Shaanxi, where 10-15 per cent of the population were said to follow the new ideological model, 5-10 per cent adhered to the old model, and 80 per cent combined old and new models (CNA, 13 March 1955). Shaanxi was a part of the old Soviet base where the new ideological model had at this time been in operation for approximately 20 years, albeit in low profile

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* It is difficult to draw a precise line between rural and urban China. It would have been preferable, if the materials had allowed, to refine the usual rather simplified distinction between 'urban', which usually refers to the major cities and industrial towns, and the 'rural' social field which includes villages and local market centres. Marketing towns and minor cities of the types distinguished by Skinner (1964-5) probably fall somewhere between. It is probably preferable to think of the simplified categories of 'rural' and 'urban' as forming the poles of a continuum.

because of the war conditions of that period. There is every evidence that the predominant models in operation continued to combine elements of the old and new ideological models. In 1964 a village reader pointed out that young people were commonly introduced by friends and relatives (Lu Yang, 1964) and in the 1970s, an internal observer noted that this type of marriage was still common in rural areas (Chen, 1975: 186). Certainly my own impressions from Guangdong confirmed this impression. When I asked how a couple had met, in nearly every case it was through a mutual acquaintance, relative, friend or neighbour. That introduction by the parties and parental consent, or models (3a) and (3b), was viewed as the most acceptable norm of behaviour in urban areas is suggested by the number of references to it as a common pattern in the case studies and by the redefinition of the new ideological model to approximate its form.

Both these immediate models seem to have been such common procedures that they have each become widely accepted as forms of marriage by 'self-determination' or 'free-choice' marriages and have been officially promoted as such. Model (2) has been defined as a form of 'free-choice marriage' (ziyou jiehun). In 1955 the Central Committee of the Movement for the Thorough Implementation of the Marriage Law issued a statement to this effect. It said that marriage contracts in which the principals were first introduced to each other by third parties and then expressed their own agreement to the match were to be recognised as a form of marriage by 'free-will'. 'It is incorrect,' the statement concluded, 'to consider that the introduction by a third party means an arranged marriage' (NCNA, 5 March 1955). This immediate conscious model defined as marriage by free choice, ziyou jiehun, was observed to be distinguished in the minds of its holders from 'free choice in the modern way' or jindaide ziyou jiejun. As Jack Chen, living in a village in Honan, noted in the 1970s, the former was considered to be the accepted custom or standard of behaviour in the village and in other villages of its

inhabitants' acquaintance. Although at the same time they were dimly aware that somewhere else in China the new ideological model might be the custom, they did not accept it as appropriate to 'their way of doing things' (Chen, 1973: 72). 'Free choice in the modern way' tended to refer to model (3) in which the parties initiated the negotiations but the conclusions were dependent upon parental consent.

Although model (3) did not conform to the new ideological model, it was a constantly recommended form of behaviour in the educational materials published to give guidance to young people. They normally took pains to state that taking the advice and consulting with parents did not in any way constitute parental interference in marriage negotiations or mean that a marriage was not to be categorised as 'free choice' (ZQ, 16 December 1956). Advice columns recommended that young people should consult with their parents. If they opposed the match, the young couple were recommended to patiently persuade and reason with them even if it meant delaying their marriage for quite some considerable time in order to win their consent (ZQ, 27 November 1962). Only as a last resort and at a much later date were the couple advised to disregard the wishes of their parents and conclude the marriage negotiations themselves (NFRB, 12 May 1962). Although models (1) and (4) have the status of ideological models, the new ideological model has in fact been informally redefined to incorporate the immediate models (2) and (3). It is these two models which commonly constitute the recommended procedures of marriage and determine most role expectations and therefore social behaviour. In turn these new immediate conscious models derive from patterns of social behaviour or strategies which were widely evolved to accommodate to varying degrees both the old and new ideological models and mediate the conflict between them.

The threat to the older generation

The case studies suggest that the conflict between the two models has largely been played out between the older and younger generations and that this conflict has centred around the rights and authority of the older generation to control the domestic domain. The new ideological model demands that they should relinquish this power. Even the preliminary formation of the syncretic forms demands that both generations share the control of the marriage negotiations, and the persistence of these models over time has required the continual collusion of both the parents and the parties in this power sharing. The form that the models have taken suggest that the older generation has worked to maintain its control of the initiation of marriage negotiations in rural areas, and at the very least, retain their consent as a prerequisite to the conclusion of the marriage negotiations in urban areas. In both rural and urban areas the older generation rightly foresaw the consequences of the new Marriage Law for the traditional distribution of power within the household. Formerly the reputation of the head of the family rested on the orderliness of the affairs of the household and his ability to exercise authority over the members of the domestic group. His monopoly of the marriage arrangements of the younger generation contributed to the power base of the jiazhang or household head. The conflict between the old and new ideological models can be viewed as a struggle for hegemony within the household.

That the parents felt their controls to be threatened by the new law is evident from the following poem:

'With freedom of marriage,
Gone is the father's prestige;
Now comes the Marriage Law,
Mothers are no longer held in awe.' (CR, July 1962)

In case studies parents frequently perceive free-choice marriage to be a direct attack on their authority, and they expressed their hostility to the new practices accordingly. The young people's initiative in the marriage negotiations is commonly interpreted as disobedience or rebellion against parental authority causing their loss of power within the household and therefore their loss of dignity, or loss of 'face' within the community (ZF, 1 October 1963). When a young girl was courting the boy of her choice her mother who indirectly heard of the matter was furious. She harassed her daughter with the words, 'What kind of nonsense is this? It's downright rebellion. A young girl goes out and looks for her husband, see if I won't break her legs.' The neighbours and government cadres had to intervene to prevent physical injury (WC, October 1952). The father of another girl who had chosen her own spouse in a rural village refused to give his consent on the grounds that 'This free-love business, it's nothing but losing face business' (RMRB, 12 January 1957).

In later case studies, in the 1960s, parents often expressed their hostility less directly and instead resorted to delaying tactics to compensate for their loss of direct control. The most commonly cited reason for withholding consent was their disapproval of the qualities of the chosen partner. Sometimes before they would give their consent, parents imposed conditions on the parties such as the demand for certain goods and payments which they knew to be either unacceptable or impossible for the parties to meet. In a case published in Nanfang Ribao in 1962 the mother of the prospective bride, seeing that she could not change her daughter's mind by employing 'tough or soft tactics', demanded that the groom should send her 'gifts' such as ten crates of rice grain, ten catties each of chickens, ducks, pork, peanut oil and 100 yuan in cash

before she would consider giving her consent. The young couple could not oblige; but the mother continued to press her demands until the Party committee intervened (6 October 1962).

Whether they expressed their hostility directly or indirectly, the older generation often invoked traditional moral and ritual obligations and mobilised the support of kin and neighbours in support of their threatened authority. The alarmed and angry reactions of the parents of young people who had chosen their own marriage partner were often expressed in terms of filial piety or the obedience and obligations of the young to the elders and their ancestors. Just as the older generation had an obligation to the ancestors and future descendants to arrange the marriages of the younger generation, so they had an obligation to obey their parents in this most important matter. As the father of a girl who had chosen her own marriage partner saw it, 'such goings on not only tarnish his good reputation, but are an insult to his ancestors'. He is adamant, 'tradition demands obedience' (P's C, 1 March 1952). In addition, the case studies reveal that the older generation time and again mobilised kin and neighbours in support of their traditional controls of mate selection. Parents turned to kin and neighbours for help in the search for suitable mates (indeed most go-betweens usually turned out to be either kin or a neighbour) and in exerting pressure on the young should they prove recalcitrant and cause conflict within the household. Collective pressure of an informal kind was often brought to bear on a son or daughter to reinforce moral and ritual obligations invoked by parents. In one case, a girl reported how she had come under the combined pressure of parents, kinsmen, friends and neighbours to get married once she had turned 23 years of age. Her parents, anxious to see her safely married to a suitable mate, continually warned her that an older girl

just would not get a good husband. At their bidding and in their support, villagers and kin also urged her to get married and began to talk in her hearing of the difficulties which older girls have in finding suitable mates and the pleasure her marriage would bring to her parents in their old age (ZQ, 1 August 1964). Many letters written by young people to the newspapers and periodicals reported how difficult they found it to defy the combined pressure of kin, neighbours and friends (GRB, 27 September; 9 October 1962).

The Concurrence of the younger generation

The persistence of the new syncretic models also required the collusion of the parties in sharing the controls of the negotiations. The case studies suggest that many young people allowed their parents to substantially retain their traditional controls either at the initiation of the negotiations or by having their consent a prerequisite to the conclusion of the negotiations. Many seem to have been fearful or anxious about the rights and wrongs of rejecting the traditional authority of their parents. Despite the fact that the new ideological model rejected filial piety or blind obedience to the unreasonable demands of parents as in arranged marriage, the traditional obligations of obedience continued to influence the behaviour of young people and caused them to concur in the continuation of old patterns. This is evident from the study of letters written by those accused of disobedience. The obligations of filial piety, xiaodao, still seem to have invoked feelings of anxiety and guilt among a number of girl correspondents who felt that they should follow the wishes of their parents who had taken the trouble and expense to bring them up (NFRB, 12 May 1962; ZQ, 26 November 1963). Young men did

not have the traditional economic reasons for a daughter's gratitude, but the concept of filial piety had traditionally been especially instilled in them from an early age. The accusation of 'unfilial son' disturbed one young man, who in rejecting an arranged marriage was accused of disobedience by his father and relatives. They said that as a 'filial son' he should 'follow their wishes whatever the consequences' and 'even if he has something to lose'. After one year had elapsed, he wrote to Zhongguo Qingnian to ask for advice. In that year he says that he had remained firm in his stand, but he felt very disturbed because some people still thought of him as an 'unfilial son', buxiao zhizi. 'The problem weighs heavily on my mind,' he says, and 'I cannot concentrate on my study and work. Comrade editor, what does filial piety really mean? Am I an unfilial son because I turn my back on an arranged marriage?' (ZQ, 12 February 1963).

The appropriation of controls by the younger generation were directly linked to the number of opportunities for their social interaction and the introduction of new selective procedures. Bossard has pointed to residential propinquity as an important factor in mate selection. He wrote that the proportion of marriages of a residential propinquity sample 'decreases steadily and markedly as the distance between the contracting parties increases' (1932:219). Stouffer revised this hypothesis to introduce the idea of intervening opportunities by stating that 'the number of persons going a given distance is directly proportional to the number of intervening opportunities (1940: 846). In rural areas in China the opportunities for meeting and establishing relationships in the village continued to be limited by two factors, the tradition of lineage, zu, or surname exogamy and segregation of the sexes. The former is particularly limiting in single lineage or surname villages where spouses had traditionally to

be found beyond the village boundaries. Although the number of marriage prohibitions has been reduced, lineage exogamy continues to affect the opportunities of likely interaction of potential mates (see Chapter 7).

More widespread in influence, however, are the traditional norms segregating the sexes. The influence of the ancient maxims that there should in effect 'be some distance between men and women' continued to maintain their influence especially among the older members of the rural communities. Although peasant women were not always secluded to the degree expected by the traditional ideological model, segregation of the sexes was practised to the extent that mixed social life of young people was circumscribed. In the 1950s the 'under-developed social intercourse' (WC, May 1950) and the 'lack of collective life' (CNA, 13 May 1955) were specifically linked to the difficulties in introducing free-choice marriage in rural areas. Twenty years later internal and foreign observers have remarked that social relations in rural villages still display a certain segregation. Although young men and young women work together in small work teams or groups, propriety still demanded that an adult be in charge of the team or the group. 'In point of fact,' one observer noted, 'the girls chaperone themselves. In rest periods for example, they sat slightly apart and the boys would not be so forward as to intrude upon them.' It was the impression of the same observer that if a young man found that he could approach and make friends with a girl rather easily, he would be wary of marrying her himself or advising any of his friends to do so (Chen, 1973: 77).

The tradition of segregation and absence of precedent for the phenomenon of courting caused many young people to write to magazines expressing the wish that the Youth League would take a more active part in 'introducing' young people. But the replies of these organisations

have expressed a certain reluctance to encourage this practice. They point out that it was not the aim to replace traditional go-betweens by their modern equivalents which alike would have the result of ultimately removing the responsibility from the young people of initiating negotiations themselves (ZQ, 1 November 1956). Instead, and because the new ideological model demanded the introduction of new opportunities for mixed social interaction, the government set out to establish youth clubs and organisations which facilitated mixed social activities.

A new category of social relations

There is some evidence that the institutionalised encouragement of a new category of social relations between young people of opposite sexes which were neither those of avoidance or marriage aroused some hostility among the older generations of the rural villages. It was not unknown for the Youth League to discourage its members from openly fraternising with the opposite sex in fear that this might harm their reputation and draw attention to their affairs in a derogatory way (ZQ, 1 April 1955; 1 November 1956). A young girl wrote to Zhongguo Qingnian in 1964 complaining that in her village young girls continued to be banned from the activities of the recreational clubs, reading room and spare time cultural work groups. Regardless of their daughters' feelings, the parents kept them at home and prohibited them from attending any meetings or taking part in certain activities. In defence of their actions they put forward reasons such as 'when young people get together nothing good can happen', and that the young people 'may not behave properly and may even ruin family reputations' (ZQ, 27 October 1964). Two years later another young girl similarly complained to Zhongguo Qingnian that the

activities of their village club were spoilt by the suspicions which they attracted (ZQ, 16 April 1966).

In this atmosphere of continuing suspicion and segregation, individuals, if they did meet and attract each other, were often afraid to express their affections openly to each other in private or in public. They feared that they would become the subject of talk, gossip, rumour, and lose their reputations. Young people who had the effrontery to be seen together, let alone embark on a steady courtship, were often severely censured. Young couples remained shy, and fearing disapprobation they were often reluctant to come out in the open and express their affections. In one village when a couple did finally meet alone 'by contrived accident', the young man stammered out to the girl that he had been wanting to speak to her for almost two years now. Although she felt the same for him, she dared not do more than stay and talk for a few minutes (CR, September-October 1953). Several cases in the media report that after young girls were seen alone with a young man they thought they were automatically compromised and were therefore compelled to marry him (ZQ, 1 May 1956). It was often the lack of alternative opportunities for meeting and developing relationships with eligible mates which demanded a high degree of courage among those who dared to defy the norms and play these furtive games of hide and seek.

This lack of institutional opportunities to meet and mate encouraged the younger generation to support parental authority and control of the initiation of negotiations. They lost their new legal right by default, as it were, in comparison to young people resident in urban areas, although here, too, there were a few exceptions among specialised all-male or all-female occupations. For example, city engineers who were frequently posted to distant worksites (ZQ, 1 April 1955) and all-girl factories or

some 20 li outside the city limits (RMRB, 15 November 1956) had problems in gaining access to mixed associations. On the whole, though, in urban areas young people had not only a greater number of opportunities for association in work enterprises, well-developed recreational activities and neighbourhood activities, but the norms encouraging segregation no longer dominated the informal relations of the social field. It is certainly true that those who did initiate their own marriage negotiations in rural areas were those who had access to extended networks beyond the confines of the face-to-face community. It was the young activists, the Youth League members, Party members, members of locally renowned drama groups and those rewarded by the political authorities such as 'good commune members', who had occasion to attend meetings, conferences and festivals outside the village and who enjoyed the opportunity to meet and become attracted to a partner of their own choice, that were motivated to reject the models of their community (P's C, 1 December 1951; RMRB, 12 January 1957).

A conflict of interests

Those who did oppose the traditional controls of the marriage negotiations exercised by the older generation, either at their initiation or conclusion, were often forced into a prolonged and heated conflict with their parents. In rejecting parental authority, the younger generation had access to legal resources and political associations and could turn to them for support. The Marriage Law's unequivocal declaration in favour of 'freedom of marriage' provided the younger generation with the legal right to reject the old pattern of family-arranged marriage. Its clauses were often used as a weapon in verbal arguments, but

normally sustained defiance depended on the support of one of a number of political associations. In nearly all the case histories of conflict presented in the media, the young people turned to government cadres, the Women's Federation, the Youth League or the Communist Party for support in maintaining their position and exercising their controls (NFRB, 6 October 1962; Z.F, 1 October 1963). These associations cooperated in persuading parents and kin of the advantages of the new model and in cases of violence took the young couple into their protection. The juxtaposition of the old and new ideological models has not only brought the younger and older generations into direct conflict, but has brought the resources and sanctions of the kin and neighbourhood or informal groups into competition with those at the disposal of the new political associations or the formal social field. The form which the immediate conscious model took would to a large degree reflect the dominance of either one of the resources or sets of sanctions at any one period or in any one place within the particular social field.

The replacement of arranged marriage by free-choice marriage, which has brought the generations into conflict and the sanctions of kin or neighbours and political associations into competition, has been reported in the media to be one of the most difficult social reforms to implement in the history of the People's Republic. After the campaigns of 1950 and 1953 it was anticipated that this reform would make slower progress than at first anticipated, and since these early years, it has been repeatedly identified as the most difficult reform to introduce both at local and national levels. A woman leader interviewed by an Australian journalist in the late 1950s said of her village: 'One of the most difficult things to break down was the system of arranged marriage' (Cusack, 1959: 54-5). In a national discussion of the problem in the 1960s the reform

of the marriage system was reported to be the most difficult of all social reforms introduced since 1949 (RMRB, 13 December 1963). Again in 1970, in a village in Honan province, a resident observer summed up the stage of marriage reform as one of transition. 'In Upper Felicity,' he said,

> 'betrothal and marriage customs have subtly changed in character to a half-way stage that reflects the present state of social relations and outlooks in the village. The old feudal forms and content of life are being shed ... but the socialist order has not yet fully taken over.'
>
> (Chen, 1973: 60)

How far the syncretic models will be replaced by the new ideological model as the dominant immediate model is difficult to foresee. What is clear is that the syncretic models arose to mediate the conflict between the old and new ideological models and that they have persisted to the extent that there has been a tendency to redefine the new ideological model in their direction. The confict between the generations for control over marriage has been temporarily or permanently resolved in favour of shared controls, in favour of the older generation in the rural areas and partial to the younger generation in urban areas. In evaluating the relative weight of free choice and parental participation in negotiating the marriage contract, the main dividing line on the continuum lies at the point where the parties take over the initial negotiations or 'free choice' is distinguished from 'free choice in the modern way'. All the available evidence points to the fact that this point tends to roughly coincide with the division into rural and urban social fields and the dominance of the informal and formal social fields. In diagrammatic form this can be represented as follows:

Figure 4: Initiation of Negotiations

INITIATION	Parents	Parents	Parties	Parties
CONSENT	-	Parties	Parents	-
		rural	urban	
	informal sanctions		formal sanctions	

The point at which the initiation of negotiations is taken over by the parties will also be shown to coincide with points of radical change on similar continuums for pre-marital rituals, choice of marriage partner, age of marriage and the forms which the conclusion of the negotiations takes.

CHAPTER 5

PRE-MARITAL RITUAL FORMS

In most societies ritual forms or categories of standardised or customary behaviour have been distinguished from other forms of social behaviour according to their sacred as opposed to profane nature (Durkheim, 1954: 37), non-economic as opposed to economic, practical or technical functions (Radcliffe-Brown, 1948; Malinowski, 1962), non-intrinsic as opposed to intrinsic ends (Goody, 1961: 159) and expressive (aesthetic) as opposed to instrumental (technical) aspects (Leach, 1968: 525). Not all these distinctions have proved equally useful in anthropological studies, but if ritual is taken in its broadest expressive sense it universally serves to emphasise the status of actors in relation to one another and it may also be used to alter the status of the actor. The form which pre-marital rituals take both express the power relations and patterns of control inherent in the procedures of mate selection and constitute the first phase in the rite de passage (van Gennep, 1960) or the ritualised transition of an individual from a single youthfulness to a married adulthood. It is a characteristic of all kinds of ritual occasions that the participants reaffirm or emphasise in an exaggerated way the formal social distinctiveness that separate one individual from another. Nowhere are the controls of the older generation more explicitly stated than in the pre-marital ritual of betrothal.

Betrothal, dinghun or dingqin, or the preliminary negotiations and selection of a mate is marked by the transfer of property from the kin of the bridegroom to the kin of the bride which may or may not be directly for the bride's use. These negotiations and transfers symbolise the control

of the older generation over the marriage negotiations and hence their authority over the younger generation. If betrothal represents the controls of the older generation and kin groups over the negotiations and parties to the marriage, the introduction of courtship and its subsequent dominance as a pre-marital ritual symbolises alterations in the status of the individual parties within the marriage negotiations and in relation to their elders and kin groups. Gluckman has observed that 'love relationships' or congeniality fostered by courtship separate both spouses from their kin and kin groups uniting them in a conjugal bond and against the controls of the older generation (1956: 64-80). The introduction of marriage as an inter-personal relation between the two parties and based on free-choice and congeniality required transformations in the pre-marital ritual forms.

In the People's Republic of China the new ideological model made no reference to the pre-marital rituals characterising the old ideological model. Begrothal was not only omitted as a procedure of marriage negotiations, but Article 2 of the Marriage Law had expressly prohibited the exaction of money and gifts in connection with marriage. Instead the new ideological model prescribed a period of courtship, tanqing shuoai or jiao pengyou, as a necessary prerequisite to marriage by self-determination or free-choice. As a new and integral part of the negotiation procedures, it symbolised the movement from a union representing inter-group to inter-personal relations. Although the diffusion of the new ideological model encouraged the substitution of betrothal by a period of courtship initiated by the young couple themselves, a wide range of pre-marital rituals have continued to characterise the preliminary procedures of mate selection. In contemporary China it is not only that the spectrum of pre-marital rituals from betrothal to courtship is

found, but frequently to mediate their conflicting demands preliminary negotiations include multiple rituals so that the modalities of betrothal and courtship may co-exist at any one point in time. From the case studies, in the media and observations, it seems as if the dominance of either pattern coincides with the types of procedures of negotiation of the marriage contract as outlined in Chapter 4.

Figure 5: Pre-Marital Rituals

NEGOTIATION OF MARRIAGE				
Initiation	parents	parents	parties	parties
Consent	-	parties	parents	-
PRE-MARITAL RITUALS	betrothal	betrothal (courtship)	courtship (betrothal)	courtship

Betrothal

Despite its discouragement, betrothal continues to function as an important social institution in the People's Republic of China. It is a feature of the negotiation of marriage in numerous case studies (e.g. ZQ, 30 August 1956; ZF, 1 January 1966; SWB, 21 March 1974). Observations in the media also refer to its continuation as a widespread custom in rural China. A village reader published in the 1960s admitted that though betrothal neither received the protection of the law nor existed as a prerequisite demanded by the law, it still remained a custom in some areas of China (Lu Yang, 1964: 32). In the 1970s, Song Qingling included it in a recent list of traditional customs which were still in current practice in rural China (PR, 11 February 1972), and there have been some references to its persistence in China in the recent anti-Confucius campaign (Xuexi yu Pipan 10 January 1975; NCNA, 7 March 1975). The most

significant feature of betrothal is the payment of a betrothal gift, caili, to the bride's household or kin signifying the successful initiation of marriage negotiations between the two families. After the introduction of the new ideological model the transfer of the betrothal gift continued to symbolise the successful initiation of the marriage negotiations. In many case studies, individuals acknowledge its absence in the new ideological model, but with custom on their side, they felt there was no need to press for its demise.

In many areas there was said to be a general consensus that the custom should continue, although where the amount of the betrothal gift was excessive it should come under attack. It was customarily said that 'these were old rules handed down from one generation to another and nobody can do without them' (ZQ, 19 November 1964). But it was also clear from some reports in the mid-1950s that where the custom had come under direct attack, a number of strategies had developed to escape likely criticism and counter the influence of the new ideological model. In Shanxi province, a survey conducted in 1956 reported that betrothal payments there were camouflaged by various and alternative names and procedures. For instance, cash deals were concluded by parents behind the backs of matchmakers or two sets of matchmakers were employed, one to negotiate the payments and one to handle the marriage registration and give evidence that no payments of any kind were involved in the negotiations. Payments were often made in kind such as in personal clothing and furniture which could pass as permissible voluntary gifts rather than in the form of the outlawed 'cash deals'. New titles were formulated such as 'engagement gift', 'money for tobacco' or 'personal use money' to replace the traditional 'betrothal gift' or payment (ZQ, 30 August 1956). Some parents just kept their negotiations very quiet

in the face of likely opposition. For example, in one case study the mother of a young girl who was a Youth League member and a leader of a production team just waited until she was absent from home and attending a meeting in a nearby town, before she opened negotiations for betrothal presents with the prospective groom's parents (ZQ, 26 November 1963). It was more common, however, after the initial implementation of the Marriage Law, for the transfer of prestations between the bridegroom's kin to the bride's kin to remain an open and tolerated procedure of the betrothal negotiations.

The betrothal gift usually consisted of a combination of payments in kind and cash. In some case studies it entirely consisted of a cash sum, but more often it also consisted of household and personal items for the kin of the prospective bride and the bride herself. The normal amount of cash in rural areas seems to have averaged about 300 yuan in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1958 it was estimated to range from Y100 to Y300 with average nearer Y300 than Y100 (Kan, 1965: 8). In the process of computation it is evident that there was room for bargaining and hence for the introduction of inequalities. It was not unknown for families to simultaneously negotiate with several suitors in order to see who could furnish the most attractive betrothal gift (ZQ, 30 August 1956). In rural areas of Shanxi in North China, for example, the sum generally ranged from Y300 to Y400 and at times it reached Y1000 (NCNA, 31 January 1953). Another estimate for the rural areas in Shanxi province put the average amount at Y500 with a minimum of Y200. Some were said to reach Y1000 plus, but these were unusual. In one of the villages cited there were twelve betrothals recorded for 1954-5, and gifts fell somewhere between Y300 and Y500 (ZQ, 30 August 1956). In parts of South China and in 1965 it was reported in Nanfang Ribao that betrothal payments were not less than Y300 to Y400, and might reach as high as Y600 to Y700 plus gifts of food (18 January 1965). By the 1970s the available figures for one village in Henan province suggest that by this time there had been some reduction in the

value of the gifts. There the betrothal gift might consist of moveable property such as a bicycle or a sewing machine, a clock or household items valued at a total of 60 to 80 yuan together with a small amount of cash (Chen, 1973: 80-85).*

In my own work in Guangdong, it was difficult to ascertain how far the custom of betrothal gifts persisted. Certainly both the bride's and groom's family contributed to the expenses associated with marriage (see Chapter 8). In each case presented to the author, the groom's household contributed gifts to the new conjugal fund, but whether these were at any point sent to the bride's household as part of the initial negotiations it was difficult to tell. Documentary evidence would suggest that the custom probably persists.

Some case studies have included detailed inventories of the contents of the betrothal gifts, and these show some small changes between the constituents listed for the 1950s and those for the 1960s. From North-east China a case was reported in the press in which a bride's father made a list of the presents his prospective son-in-law was expected to contribute. They included items of summer, autumn and winter clothing, leather shoes, cloth, gold and silver ornaments and cash (CR, September 1953). Simultaneously the parents of a girl residing in Xinjiang province demanded a list of gifts which included two suits of cadre uniforms one of which was cotton-padded, one gold ring, one pair of gold earrings, one pair of silver bracelets, two pairs of shoes, 160 feet of white cloth and Y1000 in cash (NCNA, 9 February 1953). In comparison, in the 1960s there were no references to jewellery for personal use by the bride as a constituent of the betrothal gift, although clothing for her personal use still constituted a popular request. In one meeting of young people in a rural village, several of the participants described

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* This figure can be placed alongside the general range of wages which lie between 30 and 104 yuan per month with the average lying around 60 yuan per month.

the demands of their parents. One girl reported that she and her parents had demanded a bicycle, a sewing machine, a big leather chest, a quilt with silk surface as part of a list of twenty household and other personal items. Another had asked for a bicycle, two to three silk dresses and a pair of leather shoes (ZQ, 22 February 1962). In the 1960s likely demands were composed of cash, about Y300, household items such as furniture, sets of bedding and a sewing machine, personal items of clothing and perishable goods including chickens, fish and meats (ZQ, 19 November 1964; ZQ, 16 January 1966).

It was evident from an examination of the contents of the betrothal gift that not all the items negotiated were eventually intended for the use of the young couple or the conjugal as opposed to the familial fund. Some were obviously intended to directly benefit the kin of the bride's household. In one case an elderly man used the occasion of his daughter's betrothal to furnish himself with a superior coffin. He asked for Y1200 and a good coffin, but he later called off the arrangement when he found the coffin to be of inferior quality (ZQ, 30 August 1956). There was the odd case where the kin of the bride clearly benefited from the dissolution of a betrothal and the household accumulated capital and possessions in this way. In 1958 Zhongguo Qingnian referred to case studies where families profited by negotiating betrothal agreements many times over (Kan, 1965:8). Another report in 1970 from Henan province referred to a case in which a very desirable young woman was said to have found betrothal gifts good business. It was revealed at a meeting that she had broken no fewer than three betrothals and was even now embarking on her fourth. The observer reported that he thought that this would be the last because of the subsequent publicity attending her case (Chen, 1973: 187). It is much more likely that the criticism attending the non-returnability of the payments normally caused them to be returned on the breaking of the betrothal, and it was the high and

returnable nature of the payments which would disrupt the economy of the bride's household on the dissolution of the betrothal that led to pressure on women to remain betrothed.

Mechanisms for consent

Where the parents monopolised the negotiations, as in model (1), courtship played no role in the procedures of selection, but where the consent of the parties was a pre-requisite to the conclusion of the negotiations, as in model (2), courtship might play a small part as a means by which the young couple gave their consent to the match. Following the betrothal feast in one village in the 1970s at which the couple were given the first opportunity to get acquainted, it was observed that after a short talk they decided that they apparently liked each other's company. As a symbol of their consent to the match, they arranged to go to the county town the next day to have their photograph taken together and do some shopping. This trip had become the custom for newly betrothed couples signifying their consent to the match. The two or three hours they took to walk there and back was thought to give them ample time to talk about 'this and that' (Chen, 1973: 83-4). It might be thought that a period of courtship would follow in the interval between parental negotiation and consent by the parties, but it seems this was not so in this same village. Within a fortnight of their expedition, the young man took some eggs to his ailing mother-in-law, as he already called her, but for weeks thereafter it was observed that he seemed to forget his prospective bride completely though she was a local girl and they had attended the same school. It was explained by his parents that it would not look 'proper' were he to go visiting too often (Chen, 1973: 83-4).

External and internal observers in rural China have noted that betrothed couples could rarely be identified by their behaviour in agricultural work or in recreation within the village. William Hinton noted in his interviews with workers on a state farm that betrothed couples never thought of speaking to each other unless they had work to do together. It seemed as if this would have been a breach of the young couple's code of behaviour 'which allowed for no outward sign of recognition between couples in public and especially while at work'. Signs of mutual affection were considered by the local community to be proof of immorality and it was only when they travelled away from the farm, on shopping trips on Sundays, that they felt free to disregard such restraints (CR, September 1953). From more recent case studies, it seems as if such restraints have continued to inhibit courtship patterns among betrothed couples.

Where the parties themselves initiated the negotiations, as in model (3), betrothal gifts were sometimes exacted by the girl's parents as a condition to their consent to a free-choice match. The mother of one young daughter on hearing of her affections for a young man, said to the girl, 'Before you are married into his family, we have to ask for something from them. So you can wear something nice at your wedding. We will not ask for a number of things. All we want from his family is Y300 in cash, together with a set of furniture, two complete sets of bedding, 4 dresses and a sewing machine (ZQ, 16 January 1966). Sometimes items were demanded by the girls themselves, but generally the negotiation of betrothal gifts by the kin of the bride or the bride herself was a much less common procedure where the young couples themselves had initiated the negotiations. An investigation conducted into the custom in the state-owned Fourth Cotton Weaving Works in the North-east provinces showed that

as early as 1953 in only 18 out of 40 cases was the groom required to make gifts of cash, cotton yarn, oxen and clothing (NCNA, 31 January 1953). Where the parties undertook the negotiations themselves courtship was the predominant pre-marital ritual, but in both rural and many urban areas courtship was a new form of social behaviour. As such there was not only much opposition to its introduction which involved the breaking down of the traditional norms of segregation, but there was also much uncertainty and confusion concerning the form which the new ritual should take.

Courtship

In both rural and urban areas courtship rituals were frequently simplified and foreshortened into a few hasty meetings. Where rural couples themselves undertook the initiation of negotiations it was rarely the result of a sustained period of courtship, rather it was often the result of a number of rushed and secret encounters. A brief stroll in each other's company and in the absence of others often sufficed to enable couples to make their promises. Many a couple got to know each other through mutual family friends and only then did they take a stroll together 'to say what was on their minds' (WC, October 1952). In another village a couple were not so fortunate in having mutual friends, and it was many months before they found the courage to meet alone and admit their feelings for one another. They passed a note to each other and she gave him a towel to mark their new relationship, but it was not until three months later and at the village fair that they again met and talked of marriage. Still they did not keep each other's company, although she worked hard to gain the consent of her mother (CR, September

1953). Over the past twenty-five years it has frequently been remarked that older villagers were just not accustomed to the idea of courtship, and a young couple walking or talking openly together was enough to draw attention and imply a commitment embarrassing at a tentative stage for the young couple. Even the sustained contact of individuals of the opposite sex through work was enough to cause gossip in a village. 'They are always together, and they are not yet married!' (P's C, 16 June 1949; ZQ, 27 October 1964). The widespread introduction of the bicycle may have affected courtship rituals, and in villages within walking or cycling distance of towns with their theatres, opera shows, restaurants and shopping centres, couples may have more easily kept each other's company away from the controls of the village, Despite the urging to reach an understanding and build a new relationship of congeniality through the rituals of courtship, in rural areas courtship is characterised by its restrained nature, even in the 1970s.

Courtship was more of an urban phenomenon and there the rituals were more elaborate. The stroll in the park, visits to the theatre, opera or movies, eating in a restaurant and visiting friends were all part of the courtship rituals, but even in towns its patterns were not uniformly institutionalised. In the media there is constant criticism of couples who have rushed into rash or hasty marriages, caoshuai jiehun, without taking the opportunity to get to know each other in a period of courtship. Courtship patterns were rituals often foreshortened into a short series, or even a single, visit to the theatre, an opera or movie before marriage took place. An article in Renmin Ribao in 1957 reported on this phenomenon after some investigation of courting patterns in the city of Tientsin. During a series of enquiries at street offices where marriages were registered, it was found that some couples had had rushed into marriage there after the cursory acquaintance of one dance, one or two movies or a few strolls in the park (9 March 1957). Other articles reported the cases of couples who embarked upon marriage after a brief

encounter at the movies or in a railway ticket office (KMRB, 27 February 1957). The stroll, visit or entertainment had become a symbol of courtship signifying a level of understanding on the part of the couple which was often not present. A student at the Xinjiang Medical College observed that there courting couples had often taken refuge under the cover of Sworn Brothers and Sisters' Clubs, members of which were in the habit of exchanging notes in the class 'pledging help to one another, and expressing their respective views which were often couched in sentimental words' (ZQ, 21 August 1962). In the larger cities observers report that it is not an uncommon sight to see young couples enjoying each other's company. On my first trip to Guangdong in 1977 I was greatly surprised by the amount of free association between the sexes in Guangdong where couples were openly to be seen in the streets or in the park. According to my own observations and those of others, this intimacy of association contrasts strongly with that evident in the cities of the north of China and in rural areas. In rural areas it seems as if pre-marital rituals are generally characterised by the persistence of betrothal and in both rural and some urban areas courtship remains at a low level of institutionalisation.

The persistence of betrothal

A number of explanations for the persistence of betrothal and rationalisations about this particular ritual sequence, its form and content are revealed in the case studies. Betrothal continues to symbolise the continuing conception of marriage as a facet of inter-group relations between the kin of the bride and groom. In the case studies the most frequent explanation given by the older generation for the continuing transfer of the betrothal gift was that it took the form of compensation paid by the wife-receivers to the wife-givers. It compensated the bride's parents for the expenses of the girl's upbringing.

Many parents stated that after many years of raising a daughter they thought they ought to get a handsome sum in return (e.g. ZF, 1 October 1963). Negotiations were known to be broken off because the gift did not reach the required value - a value in exchange for the daughter which became the condition of the marriage. In one case study, a mother rejected a betrothal gift because of its low value. She used the following words in an exchange with her daughter: 'I have raised and brought you up and do you think this little sum of betrothal is enough? In the days of the past at least two times the amount would be asked for!' (ZQ, 19 November 1964). In cases of conflict arising over the value of the gift, the requests of the girl's parents often had the support of most of the village. One girl's parents were greatly dissatisfied with the proffered gifts saying that they 'had taken great pains for many years with the upbringing of their daughter, but were now to be given in return so small a present that it was not even enough for the exchange of a pig'. Many of their fellow villagers thought that they were being 'quite reasonable' in their approach, for it was not too much to ask for a betrothal present for a daughter whom the parents had brought up. Moreover, they said, it was a 'matter of convention' that when a daughter was to be given away in marriage, the groom's parents should give a betrothal gift to show their gratitude to the bride's parents for their having brought up their future daughter-in-law (NFRB, 25 December 1964).

That the older generation felt that investments in daughters should be recouped at marriage is borne out by the fact that it is the parents of daughters rather than those of sons who more often insist on compensation in the form of betrothal gifts. Although some parents of sons thought that the parents of the daughter should be compensated for their loss (ZQ, 19 November 1964), many were only too pleased to adopt the new

ideological model and be relieved of their obligations. One mother of sons said she was very pleased when her son married in the new way for it meant that she didn't have to pay a penny for her son's bride (P's C, 1 June 1951). Many parents operated a dual standard. Families who insisted on gifts in return for their daughters often encouraged their sons to marry in the new way. Jan Myrdal in his interviews with one father in Liuling village in the early 1960s, recorded the words of the father who had paid dearly for his wife and he certainly intended to get some of it back when his daughter married. He explained, 'Look at the cost of a daughter!' The same father, however, had allowed all his sons to marry in the new way for this had meant that he did not need to pay anything for his daughters-in-law (Myrdal, 1967: 289-90). A similar rationalisation for the persistence of the custom was offered by the daughters of households. Many appear to have believed that even if they had initiated the negotiations themselves, they should accept betrothal presents to show gratitude to their parents who had brought them up for sixteen to twenty years (ZQ, 24 April 1962).

Another explanation forwarded for the continuation of the custom also symbolised the exchange of women between domestic or kin groups. It was claimed that only the transfer of the betrothal gift to the bride's parents could guarantee stability in a marriage. This was especially so when the groom's family felt themselves to be disadvantaged in negotiating an alliance. What qualities they lacked could be made up in the value of the betrothal gift. In areas of poverty and agricultural infertility, the parents of boys had traditionally been forced to give large betrothal gifts in order to secure wives for their sons (P's C, 16 November 1957). In one mountainous area of north Fujian which had a reputation for its bitter quality of life, the parents of the groom felt most uneasy when

the parents of the girl refused to accept the proffered gifts. They feared that the bride would not stay in the mountainous area very long (ZF, 1 February 1966).

A more widespread rationalisation, however, for the persistence of the betrothal gift was that in its present reduced form and lower value and with the establishment of new economic relations in Chinese society, it had now lost its original symbolic meaning and function. It had merely taken on the form of a 'warm pleasantry' symbolising good relations between the two families which were of little economic or symbolic significance for the position of women. It had been argued in educational materials that the continuation of the betrothal gift symbolised a business transaction or a metamorphosed form of marriage by purchase. An editorial in Zhongguo Qingnian stated that 'betrothal gifts', caili, were nothing but a pretext for the buying and procuring of women with money and other goods (ZQ, 19 November 1964). Educational materials also stressed that the meaning attributed to the custom had not altered despite the fact that what is now demanded in exchange has sometimes changed in form. The demand for money and jewelry may have become a demand for watches and bicycles, but these gifts, even if voluntarily given, were still seen to be substitutes for the value of the women being exchanged in marriage (Lu Yang, 1964: 42-3). It was also pointed out that prior to 1949 the custom of demanding the provision of the betrothal gift had prejudiced the entry of many into the marriage market. Poor peasant lads had been unable to afford the high costs of betrothal and marriage, and they often had had to forfeit a wife. In the past many bridegrooms' families had been forced to borrow heavily in order to find a sum several times their annual income, and many a bride was said to have received silk in her betrothal gift only to find herself eating chaff after her marriage

in order to pay the interest on the debts so accrued. Many women had suffered ill treatment as a result of the economic pressure on their husbands' households. In support of this interpretation an old saying was quoted: 'A daughter-in-law who is bought is like a purchased horse to be ordered about' (ZQ, 26 November 1963).

Despite the educational campaigns, the persistence of the betrothal gift was popularly defended on the grounds that the traditional meaning and function of the betrothal gift were no longer applicable or valid in contemporary China. Now it was said incomes were secure and higher, and the expenditure involved in the betrothal gift was less, therefore debts were few and even the poorest now had access to wives. The practice no longer harmed countless numbers of women, nor was it insulting to their status in the new society. Women, equal, economically independent and with their rights of free-choice in the selection of marriage partners, could no longer be likened to goods bought or 'a form of private property' to be exchanged at will. Under these circumstances many wondered why they should not indulge in a 'warm pleasantry' (ZF, 1 February 1966).

Even in the 1970s some young people were quoted as saying, 'With bumper harvests in the past two years and with plenty of money and grains, why shouldn't we accept some betrothal gifts?' (RMRB, 24 January 1972). Some young people have thought that in the circumstances of better times and lower-value gifts, they would be rather foolish not to ask for gifts. 'What is wrong in asking for a few gifts from the fellow's family or a small dowry for one's parents?' (Lu Yang, 1964: 32). Others saw material and social advantages in the persistence of the custom, and while it continued to be the local custom they did not want to be the only ones missing out. 'If when I get married, I ask for betrothal gifts and a dowry others will not criticise me and if I wait till after I marry then

it won't be so easy to get anything' (Lu Yang, 1964: 32). Some young women were quoted as saying: 'If other people have all asked for this or that and if I decline to accept anything, will it not be a reflection on my family's social standing and way of doing things in a grand style?' (ZQ, 19 November 1964). When one young girl did reject betrothal gifts she reported that, although she was praised in the media, opinion was divided in her own village. Some said she had set a good example to other girls, but others thought she was 'foolish' because she didn't take the opportunity to ask for a few sets of clothing as a gift from her husband's family (RMRB, 24 January 1972). In 1975 the women in one production brigade described how in 1974 they still took the practice for granted as a 'warm pleasantry' or harmless custom. It was not until the anti-Confucius campaign of 1974 that they became aware that the custom implied disdain for women by likening them to a commodity to be valued and exchanged. As women of new China now engaged in independent economic, political and social activities, and enjoying equal rights with men, they thought this custom, a form of marriage by purchase, should now be broken. To demonstrate their new consciousness of the meaning of the custom, twelve girls of the brigade went in person to return the betrothal gifts to the families of their betrothed without cancelling their engagements (NCNA, 7 March 1975; Xuexi yuPipan, 10 January 1975).

Obstacles to courtship

In the competition between the customary and newly-recommended pre-marital ritual forms, not only have a number of economic and symbolic explanations rationalised the persistence of the betrothal gifts, but a number of factors have worked against the institutionalisation of court-

ship as the dominant pre-marital ritual. Some of these factors are inherent within the very definition of the institution itself. The definition of courtship in the new ideological model seems to preclude it as a form of recreation or as a procedure of mate selection which are two commonly held functions of courtship in other cultures. Courtship is normally defined to include all forms of behaviour by which a partner seeks to win the consent of the other (Burgess and Locke, 1945: 361). It is described as the process whereby individuals awaken their interest in the opposite sex, are gradually involved and increasingly interact with a few partners and eventually with one partner only. In North America social scientists have found that the connection between courtship and marriage is less direct and courtship provides an opportunity for trial and error selection or may be viewed simply as a form of joint recreation. Social scientists who have surveyed conscious motives for courtship, at least in its early stages, have found that it is seldom marriage-oriented, rather courtship is regarded as an end in itself or as pure recreation. Reasons for courtship were found to be as diverse as self-improvement, group pressure or to gain admission to a 'couples only' category (Lowrie, 1951). Nevertheless a period of courtship does also provide opportunities for intimate and personal acquaintance which has significant consequences for marriage patterns where mate selection is highly personalised. In contemporary China, however, 'love is a prelude to marriage', and the definition of courtship precludes it as a form of recreation or as a procedure of mate selection.

Although the new ideological model recommends the development of mutual understanding and congeniality in courtship, it recommends that these should be based on the foundations of encouraging each other and helping each other in production, work and study rather than in

recreation or through the exchange of gifts. Role models might conform to this prescription, but it is in their leisure time that most young couples have sought to differentiate courting relations and invest them with a significance distinguishable from the new ideals of comradeship or friendship. The bases for the bonds of friendship have been described in articles on social relations (ZQ, 21 August 1962). One such article suggested that 'friends ought to be comrades in our socialist society. Sentiment between friends is lofty, and the relationship between one and the other is equal and co-operative, full of solidity and love. Common ideals, common interests, and common lives of labour and war have bound us tightly together and have created a brand new comradely relationship between us' (Lu Yang, 1964: 17). The relations of romantic love and courtship have had to be given a characteristic of their own over and above these ideal 'work-share activities'. How was courtship to be distinguished from the common friendship of comrades? This was the question put to the editors of Zhongguo Qingnian by Xing Fei of Heilongjian (ZQ, 1 April 1956). Most young people resident in urban areas who have described their courtship in the letters to the media have almost entirely referred to leisure or recreational activities such as taking walks, visiting parks, the cinema, the theatre and sightseeing (GRB, 11 September 1962; 5 October 1962; 9 October 1962).

Courtship has also come to be associated with the exchange of gifts, perhaps in the tradition of betrothal practices, to express and differentiate this personal relationship from others. An article in Zhongguo Qingnian in 1962 suggested that spending money on amusements or gifts was very common and had come to be associated with the state of 'being in love'. There was even a saying, 'invite the loved one to the restaurant today and the provision stores tomorrow' (ZQ, 1 January 1962).

One young man in a machinery plant who was courting a fellow worker found it an expensive business. His girlfriend began to hanker for gifts which she said would publicly express his love for her (GRB, 18 September 1962). A boy in Guangzhou who made frequent trips to other provinces was encouraged and expected to bring gifts, native and special products as well as commodities of popular brands, to please his girlfriend. 'I bought her cotton cloth bags and woollen sweaters from Peking, fragrant toilet soap and plastic products from Shanghai, a silk umbrella from Hangzhou and an embroidered quilt cover from Changsha'. 'Each of these,' he said, 'she received as a token of my love, saying "You truly love me"' (ZQ, 1 January 1962). The bestowal of gifts seems to have played no small part in winning consent. A girl worker in a department store was much taken by a young man who bought her some woollen dress material. 'Things like these,' she said, 'impress me greatly' (ZF, 1 May 1964). It was the common association of courting patterns with recreational activities and the exchange or bestowal of gifts which seems to have led to some conflict between personal and political interests.

In educational materials a high degree of concern with recreational activities was often interpreted to mean a preoccupation with the individual and the private, both of which detracted from the social contribution of young people to the public, the collective and the construction of a new society (Qingnian Chubanshe, 1953: 30). In all educational materials participation in study and production took priority over recreation and the public and collective take priority over the individual concerns of love and marriage. The sayings 'Compared with revolutionary work, marriage and love is really a small matter' (ZQ, 14 September 1962), 'An individual must try and place love in a secondary position to the revolution in one's life' (ZQ, 1 April 1955) and 'Compared with the under-

takings we have been called upon to do, marriage after all takes second place' (ZQ, 2 February 1963) are all representative of the emphasis of the educational materials. Tensions between the ideal of the educational materials and common practices in courting are revealed in the letters of young people to the media.

Young couples, and especially students, seem to have experienced some conflict between the two sets of priorities and find it difficult to budget their time and attention between both sets of activities. Frequently they comment on the disquiet they experience when they embark on courtship and the ways in which they resolve the conflict. For example, one couple found they just could not participate in so many collective activities if they were to see and get to know each other. They felt 'it was better for us to be alone together' even though this meant that they were segregated from the other students for much of the time. A second couple who spent much time together said that they had to constantly remind themselves not to spend too much time on courtship so as to detract from their studies. A third couple found it difficult to concentrate on any activity which did not involve the other. They tried to limit their meetings to once a week, but the male partner reported that though 'his eyes might be on the book, his heart was already at the theatre or the park' (ZQ, 16 June 1963). Sometimes the conflict in priorities seems to have made for dissension between the courting partners and eventually the dissolution of the partnership. A girl working in a store became dissatisfied with her courting partner once he had shown a certain reluctance to continuously keep her company by strolling in the park of attending the cinema. He thought such activities would soon affect their work. He was soon replaced by a young man who knew more 'how to please me!' He took her out to restaurants or for a stroll in the street or in the park (ZF, 1 May 1964).

The definition of courtship also implied a certain degree of commitment on the part of the couple. This was not only the result of its novelty as a pre-marital ritual and the exaggerated amount of social recognition which it received due to the gossip, talk and joking which it aroused, but because it was conceived of as less a procedure of mate selection than as a form of anticipatory socialisation for marriage. In courtship, young couples were exhorted to develop the life-long habit of practising thrift in anticipation of marriage and establishing a household, and to derive mutual satisfaction and support in solving life-long occupational, livelihood and study problems. One educational article in Zhongguo Qingnian stressed that love and courtship were only the prelude to marriage or common life between a man and a woman and above all life-companions need to develop a relationship to enable them to find mutual support for a long and not entirely smooth life after marriage. The lines of a Russian poem were quoted to illustrate the ends of courtship:

> 'Life is not idling under the bright moon,
> Nor is a sigh on a long bench.
> Anything may happen! There'll be mud as well as wind or snow.
> For it will take a whole lifetime to live together.
> Love is just like a beautiful song,
> But this song is not so easy to compose.'
>
> (ZQ, 14 September 1962)

The expression of these sentiments is indicative of the tendency to play down the significance of courtship as anything other than preparation for marriage itself. For instance, as one article stressed, the mystification of romantic love was to be avoided and no encouragement was to be given to the full enjoyment of the sweetness of love for its own sake (GRB, 22 November 1962). This direct relationship between courtship and marriage has led to a certain amount of tension among young people as to the degree of commitment implied by embarking on the rituals of courtship. The procedures for choosing a marriage partner from several candidates or

courtship with more than one partner were sometimes confused with 'fickleness of love', luantan lianai, or a tendency to swing with the wind and 'abandon the old and embrace the new', xixin yanjiu, which were constantly-criticised forms of social behaviour. For instance a girl in Shanghai, cited as having 'courted' as many as five or six young men in one year, was criticised for the habit of 'loving the new and abandoning the old' (ZQ, 1 April 1956). A worker in Nanjing who apparently advocated courting a number of girls 'so that he could pick the loved one to his liking from a great many prospects' was given the nickname of 'one toying with love' (GRB, 5 October 1962).

A lengthy case history of a courtship cited in Zhongguo Qingnian in 1956 became the occasion of widespread debate on the stability of courtship and its relation to marriage. The debate was occasioned by a letter which a couple wrote to the editor describing how they had both been the subjects of 'criticism'. She, because after promising to try and cultivate her love for another man and finding she couldn't, had fallen in love with the young man correspondent. She had therefore been accused of taking the new as she got tired of the old. The young man had been criticised for butting in and edging the other young man out or sabotaging the love of another which was metaphorically stated as 'undermining the foundation of the wall'. Apparently Zhongguo Qingnian was flooded with letters as a result of the publication of their case history. Many questioned the definition of courtship as a permanent relationship leading directly to marriage. Was this not abandoning the principles of 'free will' or voluntariness which were the foundations of the new form of free-choice marriage or marriage by self-determination? To carry an initial decision through however much it had turned sour was surely no different from the feudal concept of 'virtue' based on the premise that

'love should never change'. Surely it was not wrong to change one's mind even though an initial choice had been made? Other letters countered the above arguments and suggested that a change of mind was indeed wrong and that the girl should be criticised for changing her mind after promising to try and love another young man. Some admitted that they frankly did not know which view was correct: to hold to a given promise, carefully or carelessly made, or correct an error and make a new choice (ZQ, 1 April 1956). A village reader on love and marriage published in 1964 did recognise two possible outcomes of courtship, one that leads to marriage and another that leads to its break-up. In a forced relationship, the author said, it is often the case that 'the melon that is gathered by force is not sweet' and the rejected often feel cheated as a result and suffer, therefore in these circumstances a break in relations should not be averted. But the same booklet then immediately went on to criticise 'fickleness of love' which was characterised by changeability and untrustworthiness, zhaosan musi, thereby hardly failing to associate change with frivolity (Lu Yang, 1964: 19).

The new immediate conscious models are characterised by a combination of elements of both betrothal and courtship. In the rural areas certain factors have encouraged the persistence of the betrothal rituals and gifts, although these have been slightly modified by mechanisms providing for the consent of the parties. In the urban areas, courtship has become the dominant pre-marital ritual although the new immediate conscious models differ from the new ideological model in that courtship, despite constant encouragement, has mainly remained at a low level of institutionalisation. The form which characterises the new ideological model has been modified by the persistence of betrothal, the history of segregation and the tensions within the definition of courtship itself.

In both rural and urban areas the form which the pre-marital ritual forms take directly reflects patterns of control of the marriage negotiations. Where the older generation and kin groups initiate the negotiations, their preliminary phases usually take the form of betrothal; where the younger generation personally take over the initiation of the negotiations, courtship, albeit often at a low level of institutionalisation, becomes the dominant pre-marital form. The forms which the pre-marital rituals take are not only a reflection of these controls, but at the same time the rituals serve as a means to emphasise and endorse the dominant patterns of generational controls.

CHAPTER 6

AGE AT MARRIAGE

'When a man is old enough, he should get married; when a girl is old enough she should be given away' (Lu Yang, 1964: 23; ZQ, 12 April 1962). This old maxim, said to have been handed down from generation to generation during the past several thousands of years, is reported to have a new meaning in China today. A most important component of the new ideological model has to do with raising the age at which marriage takes place. The advocation of late marriage wanhun, far from being relegated to a simple or minor problem of daily life, has been raised to become a major problem representing broader changes in ideological structures (RMRB, 30 January 1971). At a provincial conference held in 1974 it was emphasised that:

> 'After establishing a socialist mode of production, late marriage along with planned parenthood constituted a profound revolution in the realm of the superstructure. Since it was a matter of fundamental importance in changing existing habits and customs and transforming China, undertaking this reform was of great and far-reaching significance for the individual and the nation. It has constituted a set policy of the Party for the period of socialist revolution and construction.'
>
> (SWB, 20 November 1974)

Perhaps in the new ideological model of marriage, no aspect more than the age of marriage has been so widely publicised.

The new ideological model distinguished between the statutory ages of marriage (18 years for girls and 20 for boys) and the appropriate shidude ages of marriage. As Chapter 3 has illustrated, these have been interpreted qualitatively as the ages of marriage worked out by the young men and women themselves according to their own particular circumstances and in full knowledge of the advantages of late marriage, and quantitatively as 23 and 25 years for women and men in rural areas and

25 and 28 years for women and men in urban areas. The advocation of the 'appropriate' age of marriage has brought the new ideological model into conflict with customary ages of marriage. The age of marriage in the past predominantly coincided with the new legal age of marriage rather than with the appropriate ages of marriage advocated in the new ideological model (see Chapter 2). To take one survey of the age of marriage conducted in 1929-31, it was found that 45.1 per cent of men and 72.2 per cent of women were married at or below the new legal ages (18 and 20), and only 15.5 per cent of men and and an even smaller proportion of women married at the approximate average age recommended in the new ideological model.

Table 6: Age of Marriage for persons married in 1929-31 in 12,456 farm families in 22 localities and 11 provinces. Percentage distribution of age at marriage

	MALE	FEMALE
Under 14 years	4.8	5.4
15 - 19	40.3	66.8
20 - 24	39.4	25.4
25 - 29	10.1	2.3
30 +	5.4	.1
	100.0	100.0

(Source: Chiao, 1934: 28).

In the absence of national statistics today, it is necessary to turn to more localised and impressionistic data such as local surveys and case studies reported in the media to ascertain both the actual ages of marriage and the ages at which the young people feel they are expected to look for a spouse.

The first surveys of the 1950s reflected the traditional custom of child and early marriage. For instance, in 1953 it was reported that in a village of nearly one hundred households in one county in Hunan province, with the exception of one eighteen-year-old girl, all the girls above 13 years of age had been married (NCNA, 9 February 1953). In 1956 at the time of the first campaign against early marriage, it was reported that by and large young people got married as soon as they reached the legal age of marriage. The average age of marriage in a factory in Peking was a little more than nineteen years of age and some students were barely out of middle school when they started their wedded life (ZQ, 6 September 1956). One teacher taking a third year class in a Junior Department of a Girl's School in Wuhan municipality reported that of 40 students aged 15 to 19, two were married and 6 or 7 were talking of marriage (ZQ, 16 November 1956). In the same year the magazine Zhongguo Qingnian undertook a survey of the age of marriage among factory workers. It made the general observation that although very few young persons got married below the legal age, many got married as soon as they reached the legal ages. The survey chose as examples of this trend a cotton mill and a chemical plant in which 43 out of 55 and 24 of the 29 female workers were married before they reached twenty-one years of age. The average age of marriage was said to be nineteen years of age. The survey concluded that an absolute majority of young people married early, and that this tendency was especially marked among female workers (6 September 1956).

By the 1960s certain patterns of behaviour began to emerge which differed for urban and rural areas. In rural areas young people seemed to marry at or near the legal ages or somewhere between these ages and their early twenties. After a campaign for late marriage in one village it was reported that girls tended to get married at between twenty-two

and twenty-four, although circumstances could and did still encourage earlier marriage (Myrdal, 1967: 111). In other villages in 1964 it was reported that it was quite rare for girls in their early twenties to remain unmarried and that most girls were married and had one or two children by the time they were twenty-three years of age (ZQ, 1 August 1964). In a Henan rural village in the 1970s, marriages were negotiated early or nearer the legal age (Chen, 1973: 80). In one case a couple were informally married, at eighteen and nineteen years of age, or below the legal age for the boy. Despite the refusal of the government administration to register the marriage, the boy's mother had encouraged the couple to live together as man and wife (Chen, 1973: 78). A county cadre in Guangdong province told two Canadian anthropologists that in the county as a whole, about one-third of the couples married near to the appropriate ages of twenty-three and twenty-five; in one-third of the cases one of the pair is younger, and in the remaining one-third, neither of the couple has reached the appropriate age (Johnson, 1976: 45).

Jiang Village

In Huadong Commune in which Jiang village is located, there had been no special campaigns to introduce late marriage, but informants thought there to be general support for raising the age of marriage. One of the leaders of the commune thought that now young people were married around the ages of twenty-four to twenty-six, and certainly no earlier than twenty-four for men and twenty-three for girls. When the age of marriage was surveyed in the one village, of all those now resident there and married in the 1970s, the average age of the ten

couples was 26.3 for men and 24.4 for women.

Table 6: Age of Marriage, Jiang village

YEAR OF MARRIAGE	MALE	FEMALE
1977	29	29
1974	30	26
	27	26
1973	25	26
	26	22
1971	24	20
1970	24	21
	26	22
	26	23
1970s	28	28

These figures are higher than the average of marriage for previous decades. The age of marriage was obtained for all those men and women under the age of 60 years and a comparison by decade would seem to suggest a general increase in the age of marriage.

Table 7: Age of Marriage: a comparison by decade in Jiang village

DECADE OF MARRIAGE	NUMBER OF MARRIAGES	AVERAGE AGE MALE	AVERAGE AGE FEMALE
1970s	10	26.3	24.4
1960s	9	25.0	21.2
1950s	3	22.1	21.1

Where both partners were still alive it was possible to compute age differences between spouses for the previous thirty years. The average age difference was 2.8 years and in all cases except two the wife was younger than the husband. The age differences between spouses had not altered significantly over the past three decades.

Table 8: Age difference of spouses in Jiang village

AGE DIFFERENCE (YEARS)	NUMBERS
0	2
1	7
2	3
3	5
4	4
5	2
6	3

In many households there were sons and daughters living at home in their early- to mid-twenties who were not yet married.

Table 9: Age and marital status in Jiang village

AGE	SINGLE	MARRIED	WIDOWED	TOTAL
0 - 9	39	-	-	39
10 - 19	23	-	-	23
20 - 29	23	12	-	35
30 - 39	-	22	1	23
40 - 49	-	8	-	8
50 - 59	-	8	3	11
60 - 69	-	2	4	6
70 - 79	-	-	1	1
80 +	-	-	1	1
	85	52	10	147

In the other two villages where interviews were undertaken the average ages of the six couples married in the 1970s was 26.3 for men and 24.5 years for women. These figures all seemed higher than previous documentation on the age of marriage would have suggested and the actual ages of marriage largely fell within the appropriate age categories. The fact that the sample is made up of wealthy communes in the Pearl River delta and range between 15 and 40 km from the city of Guangzhou may have some bearing on their average ages of marriage.

In the urban areas it seems that young people might well wait until their mid-twenties before they get married. Most of the role models either wait to their late twenties or early thirties to initiate marriage negotiations, but many letters to the media indicate that urban correspondents are more likely to marry when they are in their mid-twenties. The most significant correspondence on the age of marriage was aroused by the publication of educational articles advocating late marriage in Gongren Ribao (Workers' Daily) in 1962. The editors of that paper revealed in November 1962 that they had received in response to their articles nearly 500 letters weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of late marriage, and subsequently they published a selection of these in a discussion entitled 'Is it good or bad to get Married Early?' In these letters the urban correspondents were divided between those who had got married at 23 and 24 and those who at the ages of 25 and 26 remain unmarried and think that this age is still too young for marriage (GRB, 18 September 1962; 5 October 1962). From my own personal observations among cadres and professional workers in their late twenties in the summer of 1973, it was evident that many of this group were still unmarried at this age. In the second visit questions on the age of marriage were asked of those who lived in a factory housing complex and an urban housing

estate and who were married in the 1970s. The average age of the four couples was 28.5 for men and 25.75 for women. The available evidence does begin to allow for a continuum to be drawn up between the legal and appropriate ages of marriage and to begin to correlate actual ages of marriage with rural and urban social fields. However, the dominant feature of the correspondence columns is that in both rural and urban areas young people experience considerable pressure to marry as soon as they reach the legal age of marriage and until they have actually married. Letters to the media reveal these expectations among the ego-centric networks of the correspondents.

Pressures to marry

Many correspondents refer to the pressures of public opinion and particularly those from parents, kin and neighbours in favour of early marriage or at least against the delay of marriage or late marriage. In many cases the young people described the pressures that they experienced once they passed into their early twenties. One correspondent noted that all young people over the age of 20 become the subject of gossip if they remain unmarried (GRB, 9 October 1962). One young man who was 25 said he had reached the age when he had become 'desperate about possible spinsterhood if he did not settle down fast' (RMRB, 15 November 1956). Many of the role models who delayed their marriage until their late twenties said that they had been under constant pressure to marry since their early twenties (ZF, 1 June 1963; ZQ, 1 August 1964). Their individual experiences are corroborated by general commentaries on the problem.

Several correspondents to Gongren Ribao generalised from their own experience and referred to the importance of this social pressure in working against the raising of the age of marriage. They reported that from their experience and observations it was very difficult for young people to withstand the persuasive influence of others, particularly from friends, parents and kin. Several described how relatives and friends exerted pressure. Three young factory workers wrote that they had discussed the question at length and concluded that, although the policy of late marriage theoretically speaking rested on sound ideological and economic foundations, in actual practice the question of taking up the matrimonial problem at the age of 30 for the man and around 25 for the woman could not, they feared, find ready acceptance by the general public in society and much less so in the factories and in the countryside. 'Although some people think of getting married later,' they said, 'a number of persons around them will often chide them, put pressure on them, or jeer at them and express pity as if they have done something wrong' (GRB, 18 September 1962). Another correspondent warned that from his experience the difficulties of withstanding these types of social pressure exerted in favour of early marriage should not be underrated (GRB, 27 September 1962). Again in the 1970s there are references to the continuing influence of parents, kin and peers, and in 1973 cadres from Guangdong province suggested that the pressure of parents in favour of early marriage was still a deterrent to the full implementation of the new ideological model (Johnson, 1976: 45).

Although young people in both rural and urban areas report that they have experienced social pressure against delaying their marriages, the sources of this social pressure differ. In rural areas the pressure was predominantly that of the parents who, with the support of kin and

neighbours, wished to find wives for their sons in order to acquire the services of a daughter-in-law or enjoy their grandsons. Parents often expressed their opposition to the implementation of the new policies in terms of their desire to 'drink a cup of tea provided by a daughter-in-law' (Johnson, 1976: 45), or with the folk saying 'plant seedlings early and you will enjoy a rice crop early; have a daughter-in-law early and you will enjoy happiness [grandsons] early' (GRB, 11 September 1962). Parents and kin often encouraged young people to marry early in the hope of enjoying their grandchildren and particularly grandsons. One 23-year-old was the only son of parents who were quite advanced in age and therefore increasingly worried about his matrimonial problem and the birth of grandchildren. He noted that his relatives and friends were also very concerned about him and some of them had zealously introduced him to girls they knew well (GRB, 9 October 1962). Another young man reported that he had been unable to withstand the influence of his parents and had got married at an early age. They had openly wanted a male child early in line with the custom of 'finding a wife for one's son early so that one can enjoy a comfortable life early' (GRB, 27 September 1962). In Upper Felicity village in 1970 it was the wish of the boy's mother to have a grandson which encouraged her to defy the law and the government administration and bring a wife into the household for her underage son (Chen, 1973: 78).

Other parents might express their preferences for early marriage in terms of bringing another woman into the household. One mother initiated marriage negotiations on behalf of her son on the grounds that it was time she had some extra help in the household (Chen, 1973: 80). A transportation worker who was less than 19 years of age reported how he was encouraged to marry despite his young age by kinsmen and friends,

who 'seeing that he was without help in everyday life' introduced him to girlfriends and persuaded him that it was time 'to set up a small family' (GRB, 14 July 1962). It was not only sons who were pressured to provide descendants; girls too found their parents often became anxious as they approached marriageable age and expressed their preference for early marriage in terms of a wish for grandsons (ZF, 1 June 1963).

By far the most important factor operating in urban areas against the adoption of the appropriate age of marriage was the fear that, unless young people find a prospective spouse while they were young, they will indeed miss out. Age itself is perceived to be an important criterion in mate selection. Many of the correspondences reveal a great deal of anxiety among those of the appropriate age who now find difficulty in searching for a suitable mate, and among the younger correspondents who anticipate a declining field of desirable mates as they get older. These fears are often induced by parents, kin and especially peers. The following examples of this type of pressure are taken from several different letters. 'You are not very young, you should start looking for a mate' (GRB, 16 October 1962). One twenty-year-old was advised by his workmates to look for his girlfrield right now. 'When you grow several years older, you will find it difficult to get one' (GRB, 11 September 1962). One 26-year-old correspondent reported that he and his friends felt greatly pressured by folk saying such as 'a man cannot find his mate when he is old, and a woman is no longer wanted when she is old' (GRB, 18 September 1962). A similar folk saying that a 'woman past the age of 20 and men past the age of 25 need no longer think of finding suitable and compatible mates' was reported by one girl to be commonly cited in her factory (GRB, 18 September 1962). A 24-year-old technician with a number of skills and educational qualifications was constantly

told that 'it will be too late to get married when one is a little older, nobody will be after you when you reach the age of 30...' (GRB, 18 September 1962). One set of parents advised their 21-year-old son, 'You must grasp the right moment for handling your marriage problem. When you grow older, the young, beautiful and progressive girls will have boyfriends already so you will eventually be unable to find an ideal wife.' These words sounded very reasonable to the young steel worker and as a result he was very much worried that if he delayed his marriage he might not be able to find his ideal mate in the future (ZQ, 28 July 1964). These types of social pressure were commonly cited and some young correspondents reported that as a result of conflicting pressures they had become preoccupied with their mating problems. One young boy said he had become so bewildered and confused that he could neither study in the daytime or sleep well at night (ZQ, 28 July 1964).

The conflict between the demands of the new ideological model and the influence of peers, parents and kin is particularly acute among those who were originally influenced by the new ideological model to postpone their marriages until the problems of those older than themselves and who are looking for a mate caused them to question that decision. Where the correspondent's reference groups include such a category, their experience is likely to cause the correspondent much anxiety and he is tempted to reconsider his original decision to postpone his marriage. Some of the letters merely imply the influence of such a reference group. The older workmates of one twenty-year-old kept telling him that he should look for his mate now as it is much more difficult to look for a mate later (GRB, 11 September 1962). Another letter, however, states the problem particularly clearly. The correspondent says that after having read some of the educational articles in the papers he has learned

that many advantages can be reaped from late marriage but, as he goes on to say:

> 'Yet in my mind there is still some worry and anxiety that I may not be able to get a wife when I grow old. Many of my male comrades around the age of 30 have already built for themselves a certain foundation either with respect to work or study or economic power, and conditions really permit them to fall in love and get married. As a matter of fact, they do want to fall in love and get married. However, girls do not wish to fall in love with men at their age. Girls are unhappy when they are told that their boyfriends are men of around thirty. "Who would marry a man who has already lived half of his life?" they would say. Unable to find a wife, these men become pessimistic and disappointed, and regret they have wasted their youth. I am going to be 26 soon, and I still feel it is a little bit too early to get married at that age. I want to think of my marriage when I reach 30. Yet I am worried that I may be like these comrades. What should I do?'
>
> (GRB, 11 September 1962)

Another correspondent expressed similar fears. He was nearly 26 and, though he thought it seemed a bit early to get married, he and a number of friends had lately all become vexed and worried by the difficulties experienced by those who were older than themselves in finding a suitable mate. 'What shall I do,' he says, 'if I fail to find my mate when I grow older year after year? After pondering the matter, I am in conflict with myself and do not know what to do' (GRB, 18 September 1962).

The correspondence columns reveal that it is not so much the fear of remaining single that influences young people so much as finding an 'ideal' or 'suitable' mate or a 'good prospect'. They rarely elaborate in this context what they mean by 'ideal' or 'suitable', although the words young, beautiful and progressive feature regularly. (For common definitions of 'ideal' and 'suitable', see Chapter 7). There is some indication that the conflict between raising the age of marriage and age as a criterion of choice has brought the older and younger youths into competition for a common pool of girls. One correspondent, herself a

school teacher, complained in the media that government cadres and members of the army constantly sought out girl students as objects of their attention and looked upon schools as the place for them to seek out mates. She thought that because they were older and therefore experienced more difficulty in finding a mate, they felt that they should court younger girls who would be less discerning or discriminating than the older more culturally advanced girls (ZQ, 16 November 1956). College students certainly felt that there was cause for anxiety if they had not found a mate among the many boys and girls at college, for it was thought to be much more difficult to find a suitable mate once they had been assigned to a work place (ZQ, 16 June 1963).

It seems that the anxiety invoked by the fears of finding a suitable mate were particularly characteristic of urban areas. In the cities the increasing practice of young people taking the initiative in negotiating their own free-choice marriage has meant that they themselves feel the responsibility of making the choice of a suitable marriage partner. There is probably less anxiety displayed among the young people about finding an ideal mate in rural areas, as this choice is still very much the responsibility of the elders of the household who control the negotiations for marriage. Moreover in urban areas, the gradual abolition of betrothal and its replacement by informal pre-marital courtship has left no system of spouse reservation that is given social recognition to allay the fears of young people that they will not find a good mate or, if they do find one, that they will not lose him or her unless they have that formal social recognition. Again this contrasts with social practices in rural areas where the custom of betrothal to which there was there was no legal age barrier continued to operate a system of reservations which is given social recognition. The custom of betrothal and the

fact that marriage negotiations in the rural villages are likely to be concluded nearer the legal than the appropriage age, mean that they do not experience the longer period of anxiety expressed by urban correspondents between the legal and actual ages of marriage.

Alternative strategies

In urban areas young people have sometimes mediated the conflicting demands of the new ideological model and the social pressures from peers and kin by modifying the new ideological model. A strategy commonly mooted was that of falling in love early but delaying marriage for a few years. This resolution was seen not only to allay the anxieties about finding a suitable mate, but if the courtship was handled well surely it would also fulfil the aims of the new ideological model to promote progress in work, study and political consciousness (GRB, 5 October 1962). Several correspondents advocated 'falling in love early'. One did so in order that he might pick a loved one to his liking from a great many eligible mates. 'This time of youth,' he said, 'was an opportunity one must not miss. A very good opportunity that may not come again and should be prized' (GRB, 5 October 1962). Another felt that young people were caught in a dilemma of avoiding love early and not wasting their energy and the fear that they may not be able to find suitable mates when they were older. He concluded that the resolution of the dilemma depended on the way courtship was handled by the individuals concerned (GRB, 9 October 1962). The only disadvantage of this strategy was perceived to be the lack of guarantees in this informal arrangement, that is that one of the partners might change their minds in the intervening period before marriage. A 26-year-old factory worker who wanted

to postpone his marriage was pressured by his prospective spouse who feared that he would change his mind in the meantime. If she didn't make sure of him now she might miss out later (GRB, 5 October 1962).

A few urban correspondents rejected the new ideological model altogether. One young man who became very anxious as a result of social pressures in favour of early marriage got married at the age of 20 (ZQ, 28 July 1964). This solution was rationalised by another correspondent who thought that early marriage at least brought peace of mind early and since one is going to get married anyway, does it matter if it is early or late (GRB, 16 October 1962)? The close correlation of early marriage and early childbirth in the educational materials has led some to ask that if families are planned will this not alleviate many of the disadvantages of early marriage (ZQ, 1 June 1962; 7 July 1962)? One correspondent thought that individual solutions to the problem depended upon personal circumstances. 'It was probably all right,' he said, 'for those who possessed skills and who were drawing higher wages to remain single until they were older, but it was impracticable for those without qualifications' (GRB, 18 September 1962). Others were more skeptical and suggested that the whole policy of late marriage was thought up by those who were already married and did not have to worry about getting a wife themselves. 'They just want to comfort us and make us bachelors happy' (GRB, 11 September 1962). All the advantages linked to late marriage were said by another correspondent to 'simply give some consolation to those of us who were still single' (GRB, 18 September 1962).

Despite such sentiments, there is sufficient impressionistic evidence to suggest that the age of marriage in rural and urban areas is probably increasing, and certainly the data obtained from Jiang village would support these impressions. The most important factor working in favour

of raising the age of marriage has been the introduction of the new ideological model. Most of the letters to the media illustrate that the correspondents were familiar with the advantages of late marriage and especially its implications for study and political progress as listed in the educational materials. Moreover the emphasis of the educational materials has been adapted to alleviate current fears and anxieties of young people such as the potential difficulties of finding a mate when older. The educational articles have begun to stress that the more young people devote themselves to study and work, the more they themselves fall into the category of 'desirable' or 'ideal' mates and that as more and more young people follow the recommendations of the new ideological model, the less will the fields of desirables narrow with age. One letter written in support of the new ideological model quoted a saying now common in Zhejiang province that just as 'there is a hole for each snail so there is a mate for each person' (GRB, 9 October 1962). The influence of the educational materials on young people is mainly implicit in their letters, although in one letter a correspondent explicitly states that at a time when he was wavering in his opinions the educational materials printed in the media were influential in determining his final decision (GRB, 18 September 1962).

In a few cases young people experienced unidirectional pressures in that the influence of parents and kin in favour of late marriage coincided with the demands of the new ideological model. The parents of a 20-year-old road maintenance worker who was courting persuaded him not to have a girlfriend too early for it would only divert him from his studies. They had said, 'What girl would love you if your work is poor and your thought backward?' After listening to them and giving the matter some consideration he felt that their advice was very reasonable and that

they really cared for him (GRB, 11 September 1962). In another case it was the elder brother who attempted to persuade his younger brother to postpone his pending marriage and concentrate his efforts on study, although the younger brother did reject his advice in the end (GRB, 27 September 1962). Perhaps the negative examples of those around them were more influential than mere words of advice, for several of the correspondents quoted how they had been influenced by personal acquaintances who had got married, borne children and become preoccupied and burdened with household matters to the detriment of their work and other interests (GRB, 11 September 1962; 9 October 1962). These cases though are far outweighed by the number in which parents, kin, neighbours and peers exert pressure in favour of early marriage.

The new policy of advocating late marriage brought the new ideological model into competition with existing ideological and immediate conscious models held by social groups in China. This competition has brought about a number of conflicting pressures on young people and they have mediated the conflict by adopting a variety of strategies. In rural areas, where the older generation still controls the marriage negotiations, the predominance of one immediate conscious model has generally stabilised the age of marriage nearer the legal than the average appropriate ages. In urban areas a wider variety of conscious models has evolved as the result of the juxtaposition of the new ideological model with a number of reference groups each with their own immediate conscious models. The wide range in the actual ages of marriage has been responsible for the considerable degree of latitude surrounding the interpretation of the 'appropriate' age of marriage and the designation of a lower 'appropriate' age for rural areas represents a significant modification of the new ideological model.

CHAPTER 7

CHOICE OF MARRIAGE PARTNER

In the anthropological study of complex societies, the criteria for the choice of mate and establishment of affinal alliances has been related to problems of stratification or socio-economic differentiation. Social scientists have created two poles of theoretical construction according to the degree of restrictions bounding the field of eligibles. They have distinguished between closed marriage systems which prescribe that spouses be chosen from one or more designated socio-economic categories of persons as in India, and open marriage systems in which the only group of persons unequivocally proscribed as marriage partners are those to whom the incest taboo is extended as in North America and Western Europe (Marshall, 1968: 11). Theoretically open-marriage systems should be characterised by random mating in which each person has an equal opportunity to marry every other adult of the opposite sex. In fact, many studies by social scientists have illustrated that even though no explicit proscriptions exist, parents and peer groups are often instrumental in delimiting for each individual the field from which the spouse will be chosen. In North America, for example, despite the ideal of individualism and romantic love, marriage choice is structured by factors such as social class, ethnic origin, religion and education with a strong endogamous or preferential in-group trend characterising some status groups (Hollingshead, 1950; Kerckhoff, 1963-4). The growing literature in the American field indicates a preponderance of homogamy or assortative mating in which persons choose spouses of similar characteristics over heterogamy. Wide disparities in the status of marriage partners are very infrequent. These studies also suggest that women rather than men are more objective

in weighing the socio-economic characteristics of potential spouses. Scott (1963: 512) and Goode (1970: 326) found that this was because marriage was a more important determinant for the social position of women than men in American society and therefore marriage became an avenue of mobility for them and preferably hypergamous. These restrictions operating in the open marriage systems of complex societies do not have the obligatory character of caste systems, but they are still effective and the ideology of stratification exists alongside that of individual equality and of romantic love. The role of marital choice in accentuating or confirming patterns of stratification have led anthropologists to hypothesise that to permit random mating would mean radical change in the existing social structure (Goode, 1959: 475). Goody thought that the most effective method of reducing divisions between a series of horizontally juxtaposed groups would be to introduce the principle of exogamy or at least preferential out-marriage (1971: 599). In China, reforms in the institution of marriage have been directly linked to strategies for reducing systems of stratification.

In the new ideological model of marriage, desirable or preferential mates were defined according to their state of political consciousness. Preferential mates were not only left socially undefined, but the new ideological model specifically rejected socio-economic dimensions of preference. The newly prescribed field of eligibles, bounded only by levels of political consciousness and the disregard for previous socio-economic restrictions and divisions in society, was intended to establish a broad field of eligibles. As the new ideological model came into operation it was anticipated that social characteristics such as occupation, income and educational levels should cease to be influential. The government has worked to dissociate occupation and social status by

arguing that since all jobs equally contribute to the construction of socialism, they should all have equal prestige and should not be ranked into 'grades' on an occupational hierarchy chart. Plays such as 'Choosing a Son-in-Law', based on a Hunan drama ballad, and first produced in 1953, specifically applied this principle to mate selection. In it a mother inadvertently remarks to her daughter that she could never accept a tinker or one in such a menial trade as a son-in-law. 'I would never,' she says, 'marry my daughter to a tinker whose face is as black as charcoal.' With a great deal of word play and humour she comes around to appreciating the value of accepting just such a person as a son-in-law (WC, 1 February 1966).

Despite the new law and educational programmes designed to establish a broad field of eligibles and encourage random mating, a number of restrictions operate to limit both the field of eligibles and preferential mates. Although the principle of surname exogamy has now been formally abandoned, all the available evidence would suggest that it remains the common practice. In the 1950s William Geddes, in his brief anthropological study of Kaihsienkung village, did not discover any actual cases of marriage between partners of the traditionally exogamous lineage or zu, even though it is now legally allowed. He thought that zu exogamy might still be regarded as proper, although no longer obligatory (Geddes, 1963: 30). His impressions are supported by other materials. An article published in Nanfang Ribao makes reference to the fact that parents are sometimes reluctant to give their consent to marriage between members of the same lineage (12 May 1962). In a more recent study in a village in Henan, the tradition of surname exogamy continued to reduce the number of eligible spouses in the proximity of the village in the 1970s (Chen, 1973). In Jiang village in Guangdong visited by the author, an informant

suggested that now it was common for some young people in the commune to marry those of the same surname, although she also thought that where couples were of the same surname, it was still better to marry beyond the five-generation limit.* A survey of all the households in the village itself showed that in fact only one of the 32 wives of the village had the same surname as their spouse.

The definition of eligible mates

The field of eligibles is bounded spatially by the probability of interaction between the spouses and their mutual networks and the norms of residential propinquity. Over the years numerous sociologists have studied residential propinquity and it is generally accepted that there is a demonstrable tendency for mate selection to show a negative spatial gradient as predicted by Bossard's original hypothesis (see p.132). In late traditional China, Skinner suggested that for the peasantry the endogamous unity may well have been the standard marketing community (1964: 36).

My own work in Guangdong would suggest that wives were normally

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* After the promulgation of the Marriage Law there seems to have been very little reference to marriage between biao cousins in the source materials and any references seldom go beyond stating the law. There are one or two case studies in which young people come under parental pressure to marry a cousin (WC, 1 June 1953) or in which young people have chosen a cousin as a marriage partner (ZQ, 1 April 1955), but in each case further definition of the kin relation is left undefined. The lack of material on this subject might reflect the fact that this custom is not viewed as a serious impediment to marriage in many areas, and where it is, customary rules are disregarded as in traditional times (?). Equally, the lack of material may reflect the fact that in the new ideological model a great deal more attention is given to the positive selection of mates.

recruited from within the commune and that the familiarity of this practice gave rise to propinquitous norms based on residence. Informants at the commune level suggested that most brides came from within the commune, although at the village level they suggested that they came from within the same production brigade. The survey data shows that the majority of wives were in fact recruited from within the commune.

Table 10: Source of wives: Jiang village

LOCALITY	NUMBERS
Within production brigade	-
Within commune	24
Different commune	3
Different county	4
Guangzhou	1
	32

Where wives were recruited from beyond the commune either both parties had kin, perhaps an aunt or older sister, who worked together and had introduced them, or mutual friends sometimes performed introductions. Often the mutual friend of both spouses turned out to be the wife of the groom's friend who had introduced girlfriends from the same locality as herself. On the whole there seemed to be a marked preference for local girls. One informant expressed this trend in normative terms when he suggested that it was 'better for young people to find spouses nearby because it would help mutual understanding between the couple'.

The data from the other communes visited in Guangdong reinforce the impression that most brides are recruited from within the commune, although in the larger villages with more than one surname, a few of the wives came

from within the village and certainly more came from within the same production brigade than in Jiang village. In one commune the majority of the wives came from a neighbouring commune, but in fact their villages of origin were closer in distance than most of the rest of the same commune. In urban Guangzhou, in each of the dozen households interviewed, where wives had recently been recruited or were about to be recruited, brides had previously lived nearby. In the factory housing complex and the housing estate of the former boat people, the wives had come from within the same housing complex. To some extent propinquity of residence is an index, even if rough, of cultural similarities and social characteristics. It can be observed in China too as elsewhere that there is a coincidence of spatial and social distances, but the operation of both new and traditional norms defining the criteria on which 'choice' should be based point to the location of preferential mates within a field of eligibles already bounded by surname exogamy and residential propinquity.

The political status system

The location of preferential mates within the field of eligibles results from the operation of two separate and competing status systems, one political and the other socio-economic. Although the new ideological model introduced in 1949 conceived political status, zhengzhi diwei, as the level of political consciousness or 'political standpoint, ideological views, class sentiments and revolutionary ideals' exhibited by an individual, in practical terms political status is defined by the degree of formal recognition or honours conferred upon an individual by the government and Communist Party. On this basis it is possible to identify a gradient of approval and disapproval based upon the differential distribu-

tion of political status. According to refugees interviewed in Hong Kong, those who were members of the Youth League, Party or who were honoured as labour heroes or 'five good workers' of enterprises were held to embody the highest degree of political status in the new society (White, G., 1974: 500). Of this group, those who were members of the Youth League and Communist Party formed a clearly-bounded category of preferential mates. In the many letters and life-histories in which young people referred to the attractions and attitudes of their potential marriage partners, there were constant references to their political status measured in these terms. In the 1950s those who had a long history of participation in the revolution had accrued a certain romantic aura. One young girl described her husband as enthusiastic, smart and capable, but what had really impressed her from the start was his personal history of revolutionary activity. 'More valuable than these personal qualities,' she said, 'was the fact that he had participated in the revolution since 1939 and was a member of the Communist Party. It was these things which put a spell on me' (ZF, 1 November 1955). Another young girl said she just could not believe her luck when she met an attractive young man who 'laboured well, worked well, was honest and was a Communist League member to boot!' (ZQ, 22 February 1962).

There is some evidence to suggest that there was some competition for spouses who had achieved positions of political power and acquired public awards. One young bachelor in his mid-twenties who was an official in village government and a leader of the local militia was described as the 'object of purposeful attention from all the young unmarried women of the villages for 10 li* around' (CR, May 1957). Another who had been

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* A li is a measure of length reckoned to be approximately 1890 feet.

elected a 'five good commune member' many times over had attracted the attention of the local girls some of whom had 'come forward of their own accord and offered to marry him' (ZQ, 22 February 1962). A survey of marriage patterns in the mid-1950s had suggested that the cases of girls marrying cadres in order to gain Party membership for themselves and win support of the leadership was unfortunately many (ZQ, 4 January 1955). The competition for cadres, Party members and others similarly categorised seems to have aroused the resentment of those not similarly endowed. A discussion of the problem of mate selection in Hunan province in 1957 revealed that many young men were rather resentful of the way in which young women were attracted to cadres rather than to fellow peasants and labourers (NCNA, 2 July 1957). On another occasion they complained that their desire to maximise political status through marriage was so high as to cause membership of the Youth League or Party to be almost a pre-requisite to a 'good match'. In Shaanxi Ribao it was reported that some young people who were 'disappointed in love' blamed the leadership for not promoting them or the Party and Youth League for not accepting them as members. They complained that without either attribute they were 'just nonentities', 'unable even to get someone to love them' (8 March 1958). The desire to maximise political status through marriage led to the odd case in which spouses freely exaggerated their access to political authority and influence. In extreme cases young men found it prudent to exaggerate their political credentials. One case of 'marriage by fraud' was reported in 1957. A young man was accused of fabricating a personal history of colourful participation in the revolution and posing as a member of the Communist Party in order to win his girl, and in the court hearing which followed the discovery of the fraud, his wife admitted to

having been attracted to him because he seemed to be 'a hero of the revolution' (XR, 28 April 1957).

If political status, expressed in terms of individual political position or award or membership of political associations formed a clearly-bounded category of preferential mates at the positive pole of the gradient of approval and disapproval, those who were said to be of 'exploiting class origins', boxiao jieji qushen, could be said to function negatively on the gradient. Below those rewarded individually and positively, political status seems to have been awarded collectively according to social origins and class status, chengfen. In 1949, or thereabouts, members of each household were categorised according to their class position either on the eve of land reform in rural areas or the public ownership of industry in urban areas. For instance, the rural population was divided into landlords, rich, middle, lower middle and poor peasants according to the amount of land they owned and worked with their own hands and the number of implements in their possession (see Hinton, 1966 and Yang, C.K., 1959). Landlords, rich peasants, and urban capitalists, because they had hired labour to work their land or employed workers, were said to belong to the former 'exploiting classes'. Poor and lower middle peasants and urban workers were said to be of 'good' as opposed to 'bad' class origins. Initially in the 1950s certain rules had been imposed banning inter-marriage between the two groups during periods of heightened class conflict. In 1952, Nanfang Ribao stated that during land reform, marriage between those of peasants and landlord background could not be tolerated for it was not unknown for landlords to marry off their daughters to poor peasants to establish alliances to blur class lines and soften the conflict (13 February 1952). Many local Party and Youth League organisations had similar rules still in operation in the

mid-1950s (ZQ, 24 May 1956; RMRB, 12 January 1957). These rules were later criticised in the media, and the central government issued educational materials stressing that levels of political consciousness were not supposed to be predetermined by class origins or ascriptive criteria and class origins were not to affect or influence marriage patterns. Rather, individual levels of political consciousness should be the criteria for those of 'exploiting' class origins just as for other social categories. One piece of advice stated clearly that there is a distinction to be made between members of the exploiting class and those born of the exploiting classes, and that young people, in considering whether they should fall in love and marry those of exploiting class origins, should appraise them according to their own behaviour and not their family background, jia ting chengfen. 'As long as those young people wanted progress, were willing to participate in politics, committed to the goals of the new society, then it is all right to fall in love and marry them' (GRB, 6 May 1965).

Nevertheless the government did also warn against the influence of ideas and standards of the former exploiting classes which might be disseminated through friendships which crossed class boundaries (XG, 16 October 1955), and not a few advice columns suggested at least by implication that compatibility in marriage was often much more difficult to achieve with members of the former exploiting classes (ZF, 1 February 1963). Like the young man who expected his wife to be a dependent and passive asset, they were thought to have unconsciously and collectively inherited some of the old ideological models from their families (ZF, 1 May 1964). This put the onus on the young people of exploiting class origin to constantly prove their revolutionary character or level of political consciousness. Despite the advice and education that it was wrong to collectively discriminate against those born into families of

the exploiting classes, there was a certain tension between collectively allocated class origins and individual levels of political consciousness in determining the acceptability of the individual as a potential spouse. An examination of the case studies in the media suggests that social origins had come to be associated with certain levels of political consciousness and that this correlation disadvantaged those of exploiting class origin in the marriage market.

What those of 'good' class origins feared was a reduction in their own political status as a result of association or a marriage alliance with those of exploiting class origins. Refugees interviewed in Hong Kong in 1970 all stated that family background or class origins had an important influence on determining a person's 'future' qiantu or chuxi and therefore their marriage prospects (White, 1974: 495). There were many letters written by the sons and daughters of those of the exploiting classes which expressed concern about the effect of their social origins on their political status and hence their relations or alliances with members of other social classes (NFRB, 8 March 1965; GRB, 7 April 1965; ZQ, 16 October 1965). An observer living in Henan province in 1970 described the patterns of association in one village between those of so-called 'good' and 'bad' class origins. When working in the fields, he observed there to be 'no difference between them and other young people they are with. They chat, joke, laugh with everyone normally, but their friends naturally do not like to visit them at home.' He went on to describe how difficult it was for them to get married, although it was slightly easier for girls. The main reason, besides the fact that they were often better read and trained in housewifely skills, was the usual post-marital residential arrangements in which they went to live in their husband's household. The patrilocal nature of marriage meant that the

problem was especially great for young men who could take their wives into households that were to some extent taboo, and girls of poor and lower-middle peasant or even rich peasant families were reluctant to accept such a proposal (Chen, 1973: 104). He quoted one case in which class origins were the obvious cause or factor in rejecting a marriage proposal. The girl involved was calculated to be ideal in every other way, 'she was an able housewife and field worker and good looking as well,' so that the negotiations soon centred around the question : 'Should a red-flag poor peasant get allied in marriage with a former rich peasant family?' The father of the boy decided that it was not only this particular match that had to be taken into account, but the future of the entire family (Chen, 1973:74). In another case quoted in Zhongguo Funu where the parents decided to go ahead with an arranged marriage to the son of a rich peasant family, their daughter used the fact of his 'exploiting class origins' to convince them otherwise (1 February 1966).

Where the young people themselves initiated the negotiations for marriage, class origins were also found to be a factor governing choice of mate. Two correspondents writing to Zhongguo Qingnian and Gongren Ribao in 1965 were specifically concerned with this problem and their letters reveal the conflicting influences at work. One letter was about the dilemma of a young man who was a member of the Communist Party. He was attracted by a girl who was a middle school graduate teaching in an elementary school and who was quite active politically. There was one obstacle to their marriage, she was from a rich peasant family. According to some of their friends this was a matter of real concern affecting his 'future', but according to others he need not be unduly concerned as long as her level of political consciousness was high. Influenced by the former attitudes, however, he wondered if he had committed an 'error' in

his association with her because it might affect his 'future prospects'. His letter ended with the question, 'did love and marriage with youths from families of the exploiting classes entail loss of class stand or political status?' (ZQ, 1 May 1965). The other letter suggests that even where individuals exhibited high levels of political consciousness, this was not enough to cancel out the effects of their origins and raise their political status within their immediate reference groups. The fact that his girl was a member of the Youth League and had made considerable efforts to study politics did not soften the reaction of the boy's workmates when he informed them of his impending marriage. They told him that as a son of the family of the working classes, he would lose his class stand by marrying a girl born of the family of the exploiting classes. The young man said that as a result he was very confused about the association of social origins and political consciousness in determining political status and he was also very anxious that he should not lose his own class stand (GRB, 6 May 1965). Indeed, it was the apparent association of exploiting class origins and low political status and its importance in choice of marriage partner which caused a young man to contract a hasty marriage before his social origins could be discovered (ZF, 1 February 1963), and a young high school teacher in Guangzhou born of the family of a former landlord to hide his social origins from his future spouse (Salaff, 1971: 322). In each instance the subsequent discovery of deception was said to be a factor contributing to the later breakdown of the marriage.

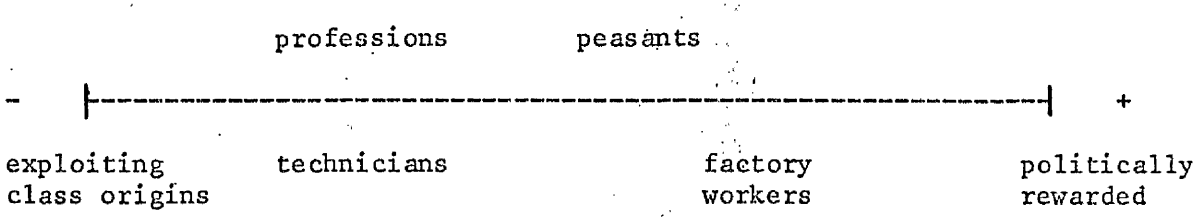
If the association of levels of political consciousness with class origins was responsible for placing those of exploiting class origins at the negative end of the gradient, the association of high levels of political consciousness with 'good' class origins placed workers, poor and lower middle peasants in the middle ranges of the political status

gradient directly below those positively rewarded for their level of political consciousness. Although educational materials pointed out that those of 'good' class origins did not automatically assume high levels of political consciousness, there had been a tendency for the constituents of the 'revolutionary vanguard' or 'real proletariat' to take their ideological probity for granted unless there was some specific reason for assuming its loss. Any hint of misdemeanour, reprimand or punishment from the political authorities, for instance, could have the effect of cancelling out 'good' class origins. In one village in Henan, for example, a girl of poor peasant origin was thought to be a suitable match in every way, but there was one obstacle to the conclusion of the negotiations of the proposed match. Her father had been brought before the People's Court in regard to some affair that might have involved punishment at the hands of the court. Although the case against him had been dropped, it was clear that an explanation was thought to be due. In this case the matter had turned out well, but it was said at the time that had the matter not turned out well, and he had been jailed, this would certainly have affected the chances of his daughter in marriage (Chen, 1973: 81). Those of 'good' class origins had a definite advantage in the marriage market in that they began with a 'clean record', but to remain within the 'preferred category' they had at least not to have a blemished political record.

Political status measured according to reward or by class origins is an important factor governing marriage choice, and under its considerable influence the traditional social status gradient has largely been reversed. The new ideological model based on political compatibility was influential to the extent that the traditional status groupings of landlord, rich peasant and the urban wealthy have been replaced by new

status groups of government cadres and certain skilled urban workers as preferential spouses.

Figure 6: Choice of Mate: Political Status Gradient



But an examination of the case studies suggests that socio-economic characteristics also remain important criteria in mate selection and in the definition of those categorised as preferential mates.

The social status system

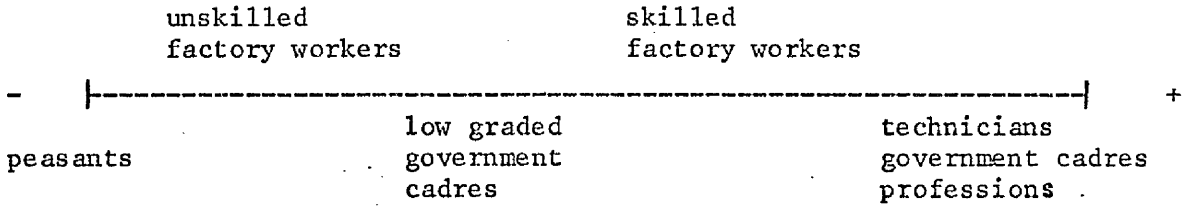
The term social status refers to the distribution of social honour in Chinese society or the extent to which individuals or groups receive respect or esteem, zunzhong or zongbai. The distribution of social status is revealed in the attitudes and expectations of their immediate reference groups such as relations, neighbours, fellow-workers or friends which in turn reflect the immediate conscious models. It was mainly distributed according to occupation with its corollaries of level of education, income, life-styles and degree of mobility or 'future'. Traditionally, marriage was seen to be an opportunity to maximise the resources of the household or kin group through the negotiation of a suitable alliance, and there is evidence to suggest that both families and the young people who themselves undertook the negotiations continued to view marriage as a means

of social mobility. They sought a partner who in the eyes of the immediate reference group was considered to have 'future'. Some local sayings such as 'Ask not if he is a member of the Party, ask not if he is a member of the Youth League, but ask only if he has money' (HZX, 15 December 1956) or 'First, look to see over the house, second look over the person, third look to see if he can earn one hundred per cent' (Lu Yang, 1964: 13) were said to indicate priorities in mate selection. In letters and life-histories, young people explicitly considered the occupation, the income, the likely standard of living and the extent of the family burden of future spouses (e.g. ZF, 16 April 1959; 1 May 1959). A lengthy correspondence conducted in the pages of Zhongguo Funu in 1963-4 on the subject of mate selection indicated that the prospects for a 'good livelihood' after marriage were an important dimension in assessing the suitability of a spouse. As one correspondent said, she hoped to choose a man who had high pay, a high position and who was young and smart (ZF, 1 September 1964). Another congratulated herself on finding a good husband. His salary was not low and he had no heavy family burden making for a good livelihood (ZF, 1 September 1963). Others in aspiring for a settled and comfortable life gave priority to men who had a high position and earned much income (ZF, 1 September 1963).

Those with skills and high wages included specialist occupations in factories or the government bureaucracy, and professional jobs such as engineers, professors and doctors, technicians, scientists and jobs of skilled industrial work which were rated highly in terms of remuneration and welfare benefits. Within the rural social field, a range of wealth is displayed according to local environmental factors which contribute to variations in the wealth of local areas and the ratio of wage earners to wage dependants which affects the resources of individual households.

In two case studies, parents were reluctant for thier daughters to marry into mountainous areas because of the lack of facilities such as uneven roads, less fertile land and unreliable sources of good food (P's C, 16 November 1957; ZF, 1 February 1966). In order to maximise opportunities for a favourable marriage alliance the accumulation of household status symbols were reported to characterise the period of negotiation. In the village of Upper Felicity in Henan the purchase of a transistor radio, sewing machine, cycle or clock was said to be a sure sign that a family was embarking on marriage negotiations (Chen, 1973: 80-1).

Figure 7: Choice of Mate: Social Status Gradient



An examination of the case studies suggests that there are two competing status systems in operation. At times government policies have contributed to the importance of each status system relative to the other* and there has been some vertical jockeying for positions on each gradient, but the location of points of congruence or concurrence on both gradients defines the field of preferred as opposed to eligible candidates. The

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* For instance at certain periods there has been more attention and recognition given to groups of high political status or greater 'red' qualities. At other times it is the technicians or the 'experts' with formal educational qualifications who have been rewarded.

preferential mate was one who combined both socio-economic and political status and it was this combination which characterised most immediate conscious models. As one girl in the midst of choosing a mate and faced by a constant discrepancy in political and social status was heard to utter: 'Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could find a suitor whose thought was good and who earns more money' (ZF, 1 September 1964). Another girl described how she had always thought that she would like to choose a husband who had a high salary, a high position and who was young and smart. She fell in love with a 'deputy chief of a section at her place of work who was also a Communist Party member and rated as an 'activist' in study. She had some criticisms of him, but on the whole she concluded that 'it would be nice to have a husband like him... I felt that he would be a good husband in which I could take pride in the presence of other people!' Her neighbours and friends also advised her 'to stick with him' (ZF, 1 September 1964).

This concept of the ideal mate who maximises both political and social status resources had by the 1960s been incorporated into the new ideological model and modified its original form. The combination of both resources as attributes of the ideal mate was proffered as the ideological model of behaviour in one booklet of advice in marriage and family matters. In answer to the question, what kind of marriage partner is most satisfactory in prospect, it replied that political compatibility is of course the most important criterion. That is, political standing, ideological views, class sentiments and revolutionary ideals were listed as the first criteria in choosing a mate, but then followed economic situation, cultural level, appearance, suitability in age, taste, demeanour and compatibility in temperament which were all to be taken into consideration albeit as secondary characteristics. 'In love and in looking for a partner,'

it said, 'considering the other's profession, whether he works well, how much his income is, the spaciousness of his home, and whether he is good looking - these cannot be considered wrong. The mistake lines in only considering these secondary issues...' (Lu Yang, 1964: 12-17).

Preferred categories of spouses

There were several social categories who were most likely to meet these joint criteria and several reports in newspapers have identified or located fields of preferential mates. One report said that women workers in the cities preferred to marry technicians, army officers and factory managers rather than workers, and that in rural areas women preferred to marry factory workers (RMRB, 23 August 1956). Another described a situation in which young women in rural areas seek mates among army men, factory workers and cadres rather than peasants (ZQ, 1 November 1956). Another referred to the preference of young girls in the rural areas for factory workers and cadres in the cities (KMRB, 14 January 1957). In a survey of views expressed in a correspondence in Hunan province, a paper concluded that the young people in the rural areas seek mates who were cadres working for the government or factory workers (NCNA, 1 July 1957). In the correspondence columns of the 1960s the preferred category of spouses were again those that combined political and social status or government cadres and skilled industrial workers, that is those ranked high on both status gradients. In these case studies it is normally difficult to ascertain the balance of political and socio-economic criteria in determining the choice of marriage partner, but the cases and commentaries uniformly suggest that there are clearly defined status groups and that marriage is still viewed as an avenue of social mobility and especially among young women (e.g. GRB, 8 March 1958).

A folk saying was said to reflect the calculated socio-economic interests of women: 'In the case of a man, one part of ability is one part of happiness. In the case of a woman, one part of looks is one part of happiness.' (Lu Yang, 1964: 14). That is in looking for a prospective mate, a woman looks primarily at a man's ability or earning power and a man looks at a woman's appearance. It was suggested in the educational materials that the concern of women with marriage choice was a remnant of the old tradition of economic and social dependence of women on the prospects of their marriage which was summed up in the constantly heard refrain 'Marry a man, marry a man, clothes to wear and food to eat'. This was said to have no basis once women entered social production and were economically independent, and it is certainly evident that the new ideological model had influenced them to the extent that few women continued to feel comfortable in the presence of those whose only attribute was their wealth. The operation of a number of restrictions on marriage choice and the presence of clearly defined status groups according to political or socio-economic criteria suggest that there was not only a certain amount of hypergamy, but also a certain degree of homogamy or marriage within status groups.

One means by which status groups may enhance their distinctiveness is the encouragement of endogamy or in-group marriage. One of the most clearly bounded of status groups was that at the apex of political status or those who were members of political organisations, and it would not be surprising to find that this group tried to maintain their social distance by placing restrictions upon those marrying out. There is no doubt that the Communist Party and especially the Youth League provided unique opportunities for regular social interaction among young people of similar political status in the urban and especially the rural areas. In the

rural areas it was the young political activists, the Youth League members, Party members, members of the local drama troupes and those rewarded by the political authorities such as 'good commune members' who had occasion to attend meetings, conferences and festivals outside the village and who had the opportunity to meet and become attracted to a partner of their own choice. These opportunities laid the foundations for a certain amount of organisational endogamy and there is some evidence that this trend was reinforced by placing restrictions upon those marrying out. These rules operated in local organisations to actively encourage those at the apex of political status to monopolise and minimise the outwards and downward flow of political status. For instance, two government organs in one locality laid down the following stipulations:

(1) Prior approval of the organisation must be obtained before courting a woman and before betrothal and marriage.

(2) Marriage to a woman comrade who is neither a Party or Youth League member is prohibited.

(3) Marriage to a woman revolutionary cadre who comes from a landlord or rich peasant family is prohibited (ZQ, 24 May 1956).

An article published in a national newspaper the following year suggested that such rules which had a purpose during the intense class struggles of land reform and socialisation were still widespread. The newspaper article went on to reprimand all Party and Youth League organisations who continued to operate such restrictions and rules on the grounds that where people were encouraged to marry within their own organisation that group is on its way to becoming a new class (RMRB, 12 January 1957). Although these restrictions were directly counter to the principles of the new ideological model, there was not only some endogamy among those particularly advantaged, but also the very categorisation of certain groups as

the disadvantaged caused some exploiting class endogamy. At the same time though, there was also some attempt by them to improve their political status through establishing marriage alliances with cadres (ZF, 1 November 1955; Meijer, 1971: 136). It is difficult to document the degree of homogamy and hypergamy which has continued to characterise contemporary Chinese marriage patterns. The degree of stratification and the continuing reactions towards heterogamy and their adoption as models of emulation certainly suggests a preponderance of homogamy and assortive mating over heterogamy. In the absence of detailed data on homogamy it is possible, however, to examine the patterns of heterogamy and identify the sanctions favouring homogamy or marriage within status groups and those that work against homogamy and favour heterogamy or marriage between status groups.

Heterogamous marriage

Heterogamous marriages usually involve wide disparities between the political and social status of marriage partners. The maximisation of both political and socio-economic status was more difficult to achieve for those at each end of the spectrum on each of the gradients of status. The absence of one was normally not enough to compensate for the other, and the further apart their location on each of the continuums, the more difficult they were to combine. For instance, if those with maximum political status were low-salaried or if those who had high salaries had no political status, then tension or conflict often resulted. The most common social categories involved in heterogamous marriages were technical personnel, who usually ranked lower in political status than in social status, or peasants who ranked higher on the gradient of political status than in social status. An examination of the tension and conflict generated

by heterogamous marriages explicitly reveals the norms and expectations which surround the choice of a marriage partner.

In this context two correspondences in 1957-8 and 1963-4 featured in Zhongguo Funu and each lasting several months, provide very interesting case materials. The first was occasioned by a letter from a typist who had fallen in love with a chauffeur, but was thrown into a state of great conflict and anxiety as a result of the criticisms of her sister and her peers that they were not well-matched. According to the editors, after the publication of this letter, more than a thousand replies from readers were received and over 700 writers were in favour of her marrying the driver (ZF, 14 November 1959). Among the letters selected for publication were a number of case histories which consisted of matches between a college-educated wife and a grade-school-educated soldier, a technician and a worker, an elementary school teacher and an automobile driver, a high salaried (16th grade) wife and low (21st grade) salaried husband (ZF, 14 January 1960). In all cases the women had enjoyed a much higher social position than the husband and in each case she went through considerable mental conflict resulting from criticisms of colleagues and close relatives. The college-educated wife of the soldier husband withstood the negative reactions of her sister and schoolmates to the difference in their educational and occupational status, and with the support of the Party and Youth League she married the soldier (ZF, 14 December 1959). This was in contrast to the bank official who, after listening to the criticisms and warnings of her friends and family, broke off her relationship with a book-keeper and married a college student instead (ZF, 4 December 1959).

In 1963-4 the Zhongguo Funu again invited correspondence on the subject of 'What to look for in Choosing a Spouse' and many readers spoke

of the opposition they had come up against in choosing a marriage partner of a lower social status than themselves. One woman, a doctor, described the reaction to her fiancé who had a minor position in a government organ. She described him as one who was loyal to the revolutionary cause, but whose position and wages were low. Her sister fiercely opposed her marriage, and tried to caution her with the words, 'You are young, clever and have professional skills. You needn't worry about finding an ideal husband. What a foolish thing to marry such a man! His income is low and he isn't skilled in any field. What happiness will there be if you marry him?' She urged her to be through with him right away and her sister's husband made a point of introducing his friends to her, and gave her photographs of several colleagues, all assistant-professors at his university, and tempted her with their conditions of work and economic situations. She recalled how he wanted her to choose one from among them and assured her that any future demand with regard to livelihood she would care to raise would be met (ZF, 1 July 1964).

One girl described in detail her unhappy dilemma. Her boyfriend was of good class origins, progressive in thought, hard working and simple in life-style. He had all the characteristics she could want, but for the fact that his job was ordinary and his wages low. Simultaneously she met a technician who earned a high salary although he was not very 'progressive in thought'. Influenced by the new ideological model she rejected the technician on the grounds that 'to rest love on the foundation of money was undesirable'. Her family and neighbours were dismayed by her choice. Some advised her, 'You still do not face reality even when you are not well off'. Still others called her a 'fool' by saying 'You simply ask for it'. She described how reactions like these began to shake her resolve. She began to think they were right. 'While it is not right just to seek

enjoyment in life in choosing a husband,' she thought, 'is it not so that the problem of livelihood remains a problem of livelihood? After all, reality is reality and after getting married one will still have to organise family life.' She continued to struggle with her mixed thoughts: on the one hand it was not good to link marriage with money, on the other hand she wanted to have a secure financial foundation (ZF, 1 September 1964). Some girls withstood the pressures and criticisms of their peers and kin and others gave in and chose again. One girl, a doctor, reported how she wished to marry a grade 3 factory worker, but on advertising their marriage plans her friends and parents immediately warned her against marrying this worker, who they said 'was only a class three worker' and who 'was not well off'. She chose to go ahead and marry him (ZQ, 16 September 1963). Another girl, dissatisfied with the low rank and small salary of a Party member who was progressive politically and ideologically gave him up once she had the good fortune to be introduced to a cadre who also had a high grade and a high salary (ZF, 1 August 1964).

These cases all involve some mediation of the discrepancies between social and political status, but perhaps the cases which illustrated the maximum discrepancies between political and social status occurred in heterogamous marriages in which one partner was a peasant residing in the countryside. Although poor and lower middle peasants enjoyed a measure of political status, it could in no way make up for their position of low social status. In the ranking of occupations, peasants were placed on the lowest rung. Social mobility was viewed as an urban phenomenon and it was often said that life in the countryside had 'no future', peasants had low salaries and their cultural level was usually lower than those of other occupations. So that for a peasant girl an offer of marriage in the city was often cause for congratulations and smacked of hypergamy.

Moreover it has increasingly furnished one of the few opportunities for migration to the cities. In one case study, when a village girl was pressed by a young man to come to the city to be married, her mother was said to be extremely happy, and the women in the neighbourhood were heard to say, 'Hurry up and go with him. Enjoy yourself. Such a good son-in-law can't be found anywhere even if you look with a lantern' (Lu Yang, 1964: 12). In contrast, several reports in the media mentioned the reluctance of village girls to stay in the countryside and their yearnings for the trappings of city life. One report cites two current sayings which illustrate this trend: 'I shall marry a man whose hair is groomed, who wears leather shoes, and carries a watch; I shall not marry one whose head is clean shaven, who handles a hoe and works with a pick', and 'my prospective husband is to be either a worker, a cadre or a schoolmaster, I'd rather die than marry one who works on a farm' (HZX, 15 December 1956).

In a correspondence on the subject in the Hunan newspapers some girls wrote that, despite official moves to elevate the political and social status of peasants, they had their reasons for not wanting to marry them. 'Farming,' they said, 'meant labour, hard living, no future and peasants had no "education".' One girl left no room for doubt as to her opinions. 'Farming,' she concluded, 'was dark and dirty and without a future.' (NCNA, 2 July 1957). Others expressed their opposition to such a fate less directly. One girl wrote to Zhongguo Qingnian in 1962 describing the predicament in which she found herself owing to the fact that her boyfriend was returning to his village to participate in agricultural production. He proposed that they both return together and make arrangements for their wedding, but she was afraid that both her father and elder brother would oppose the match because of the distance between the two villages. 'If I

go with my boyfriend,' she writes, 'will it not amount to ingratitude to my parents and to my elder brother and sister-in-law who have brought me up? But if I break off relations with my boyfriend for this reason, will others not say I am imbued with bourgeois ideas and look down upon peasants.' She went on to describe how she felt very miserable and troubled in the face of such a quandary. The reply rather astutely asked her if it could be that she was seizing on her parents' and elder brother's reluctance to see her get married in a faraway place as an excluse for rejecting a future in rural areas (ZQ, 17 July 1962).

Marriage of an urban girl to a peasant brought the maximum disapprobation. The parents of a senior middle school graduate, who was attracted to a teacher at an agricultural middle school and who was prepared to settle down in the countryside for life, were strongly opposed to their daughter's marriage plans. They said to their daughter time and again that there was no 'prospect' for her if she got married and went to live in the countryside. 'Since you have over ten years of schooling,' they said, 'how can you marry a teacher of an agricultural middle school resident in the countryside?' To show the measure of their disapproval, they insisted that if she was to proceed with these arrangements she must return to them approximately Y3000 to defray the expenses of her upbringing. At the same time they embarked on a search for a suitable husband for her in the city (ZQ, 27 November 1962). Another girl correspondent was friendly with a peasant who had graduated from senior middle school and was 'progressive' in thought. But when the relationship became known to her mother, she was very surprised, saying, 'What are you looking for in a peasant? If you don't listen to your parents' words, you will suffer very soon. Don't ever try to marry him.' Her mother asked their neighbours and daughters to support her and to tell the girl that since

she was a middle school student, she could, with her favourable conditions, 'find a good prospect in a high position and make her mother satisfied'. 'If you are in love with that poor fellow, you won't do credit to your relatives.' The girl fought back with the idea that one who labours well, comes from a poor family and did his work well was to be admired in the new society (ZF, 1 May 1964). A young couple already married feared very much for the future of their relationship when the girl was recruited to Teachers' Training College in the city. There she was teased about the status discrepancies in their match and she began to have doubts about her marriage until her branch of the Youth League began to maximise her husband's political status by emphasising the contribution of the peasantry to the history of the revolution and the value of their labour to present-day society, thus causing her to think again (ZQ, 16 September 1963). In all these cases it was the girl who was to live in the country-side and who was thought to be marrying or to have married beneath her status.

Residential propinquity has served to circumscribe the number of marriage alliances crossing the rural-urban social fields, but the low social status and obstacles to inter-marriage with peasants has been brought into sharp relief by the recurrent government policy to encourage young urban school graduates to migrate from the cities to the countryside and settle permanently. Since 1957 there has been a policy to encourage educated Chinese youths or urban school graduates and others to migrate and settle in the countryside and work on the communes or on State Farms in the countryside or in isolated border regions. These educated youths are collectively referred to as xiaxiang youth (Gardner, 1971; White, G., 1974). The term derives from the name of the movement to send youth 'up the mountains and down to the countryside', shangshan xiaxiang. It is

difficult to obtain exact figures, but it was estimated in 1971 that their number lay between 50 and 60 millions (Wang Hsueh-wen, 1971: 90). It is an attempt to effect large-scale permanent migration for educated youth,* and they are expected to 'strike roots' in the rural areas. As a sign of their intention or determination to settle in the rural villages for life, each xiaxiang youth is encouraged to establish a family and settle down permanently, anjia luohu. There is evidence to suggest that it is the problem of marriage which is one of the obstacles to their integration into peasant society and the cause of much dissatisfaction and disaffection among young people, a few of whom have found their way to Hong Kong (Lelyweld, 1974; RMRB, 30 January 1971). Not only did they fear that marriage in the countryside would 'root them there permanently', but the new migration patterns brought young urban-educated youth into close association with the peasants. Examples of their intermarriage have been given publicity over the years and their study again reveals the discrepancy in the political and social status of the peasants.

One case of intermarriage was written up in the newspapers in 1957, the first year of large-scale migration of this type. A young girl student became friendly with a boy from a poor peasant family who was a Youth League member and enjoyed a certain measure of popularity in the village. But before she made up her mind to marry him she agonised over whether or not her schoolmates would laugh at her and whether it might not be better therefore to find a cadre or a worker who 'were more suitable

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* This movement is not to be confused with the xiafang movement or system of downward transfer which required that all the personnel of government and party, armed services, enterprises and industries, students as well as teachers, spend at least one month a year at a lower or basic level of their respective units or in rural villages where they participate in manual labour.

matches for middle school graduates'. She eventually decided to go ahead and marry him and the wedding was much applauded for bridging traditional social class barriers and a reversal of the trend of village girls to move to the city on marriage. It was said at the time that village girls should cease to look down on peasants and follow the new trend initiated by this marriage. Another girl student in the same village was already said to have followed her example and fallen for the Secretary of the Youth League Branch (GRB, 29 December 1957). In one case recorded an educated youth who was already married was sent to the countryside to do pig-raising work. As a result his marriage was put at risk. His removal to the countryside and his new occupation was much to the chagrin of his mother-in-law, who vented her displeasure on the young man. 'I intended that my daughter should marry a great man. But now she has married a pig-raiser. What a disgrace!' Under her influence the girl soon began to feel that her life would indeed be intolerable if she had to stay in the countryside with a 'filthy and tired pig-raiser' for a husband (ZQ, 16 September 1963).

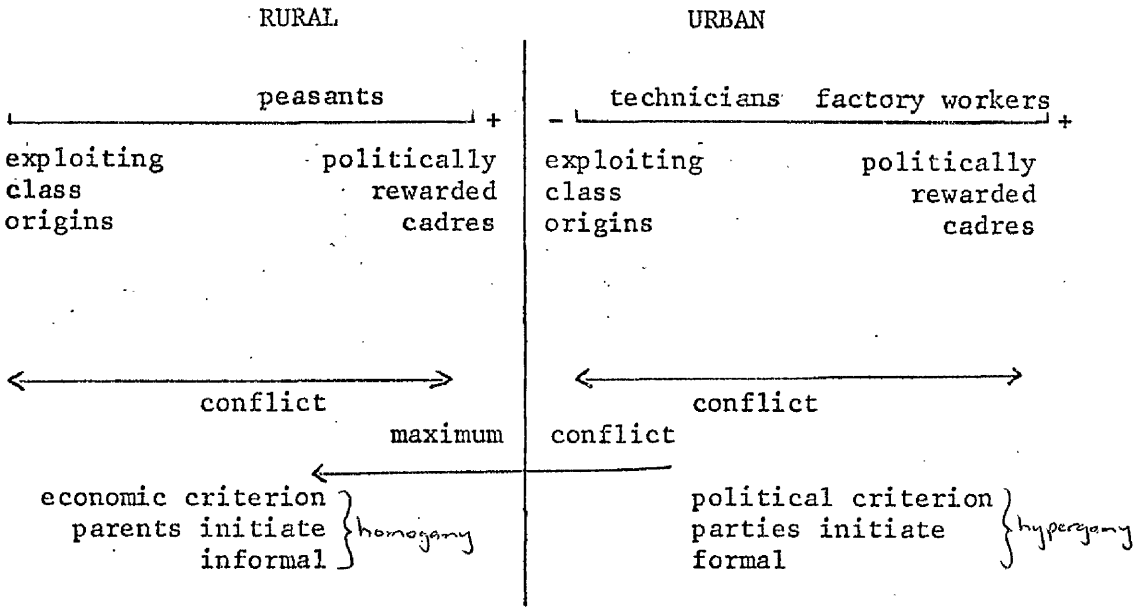
Two decades later in 1974 a similar case was cited in which a xiaxiang girl teacher of the commune middle school was married to a peasant boy. This marriage aroused similar conflicting reactions. It was hailed by some as a revolutionary act 'taking the road of integration with peasants and workers', but it was also ridiculed by others who thought that a university student should marry another university student and not a peasant in the countryside. (SWB, 14 February 1974). This was also the experience of another teacher who found that the idea that 'it is ridiculous for a Peking-born college graduate to marry a peasant' was a common reaction to her plans for marriage. Her father was among those who voiced dis-approval. 'Marrying a peasant and living in the countryside all your life,

what future will you have?' A fellow teacher called it a 'scandal'. The girl concerned thought that these comments showed that people still thought college graduates should only marry workers and cadres. She wondered if the reason was that peasants were still associated with the idea of 'dirty' manual labour (SWB, 14 February 1974).

Most of the cases cited in the media concern xiaxiang girls and peasant husbands. It seems to be so, from a number of cases, that educated girls did find it easier to make inter-class marriages and were themselves considered to be an asset to a peasant family. In one of the above examples one peasant boy's mother reacted by telling others in high spirits that she 'never dreamed her son could find a middle school student' (GRB, 29 December 1957). It is noticeable, too, that in the case studies the girls chose future husbands who maximised both political and social status. They chose peasants high in political status who were members of the Youth League or Party and renowned for their physical labour. In rural terms they had as much 'future' as could be expected, and certainly this was so in comparison to the xiaxiang boys. It was much more difficult for an inexperienced xiaxiang boy to earn as much as a peasant boy long experienced in agriculture (White 1974: 504). Also, custom often demanded marriage expenditure which the xiaxiang boy could not afford, and he was much disadvantaged in his ability to provide for his wife compared to a peasant boy and his household. In comparison some peasant boys often seemed to combine the maximum political and social status within the the village, but they were carefully chosen. As one xiaxiang girl said on the occasion of her friend's wedding to a peasant boy, 'I'm positive about looking for a peasant boy,' but she also went on to say that 'it might take longer to find a suitable one' (GRB, 29 December 1957).

The data presented and many similar cases strongly supports the proposition that both political and social status influence choice of marriage partner. In both urban and rural social fields the preferential mate as displayed in the expectations of immediate reference groups was someone who combined both socio-economic and political status and it was this combination which characterised immediate conscious models. Where there were discrepancies in the status systems, tension and conflict often resulted and the most likely status groups to be involved can be located diagrammatically.

Figure 8: Choice of Mate: The Gradient: Political and Social Status



The tension and conflict generated by heterogamy reveals that in nearly every case the marriage negotiations were initiated by the younger generation and that each status system has a basis of support. The political status system is supported by the Party, the Youth League and other organisations, and time and again young persons planning to defy the norms of homogamy find support in these organisations to withstand the pressures

from their immediate reference groups of friends, relatives and neighbours. Certainly before the Cultural Revolution, the norms of homogamy predominated over heterogamy, but the principle of homogamy and the importance of the socio-economic status system in choice of marriage partner was criticised during the Cultural Revolution. The adaptation of the new ideological model in favour of a syncretic model incorporating both political and socio-economic status came under attack. At the same time there were criticisms of the new stratification patterns based on the political status assumed by Party, political cadres, the Youth League members, the presumed association of social origin and political consciousness, and the new differentials in wealth and educational opportunities which had emerged since 1949. If and how these criticisms have influenced choice of marriage partners has yet to be determined.

CHAPTER 8

THE CEREMONIAL OF MARRIAGE

The new ideological model substituted the elaborate series of prestations and ceremonial forms, jiehun yishi, by a simple registration ceremony at which the marriage obtained the legal recognition of the political authority or the state. There was no provision for further ceremony or ritual in the 1950 Marriage Law, and whether or not a marriage ceremony was held after registration was an option rather left open in the educational materials. Once the marriage certificate was issued, it obtained the legal recognition of the state and the partners were considered legitimately husband and wife, and any further ceremonial, or the celebration of marriage in either its traditional elaborate or simplified forms, did not further legitimise the marriage in the eyes of the political authority. At the same time it was also recognised that because it had been customary to perform some kind of ceremony in the past, there may still be some necessity to allow for formalised social recognition in addition to the new political recognition (Lu Yang, 1964: 35). The variation in immediate conscious models that can be identified all combine some form of social as well as political recognition.

The form that the political recognition takes, or the registration of marriage, is standardised throughout China, and in all the immediate conscious models it is the preliminary to some form of ceremonial inviting social recognition of the new partnership. It is this latter form of recognition which is often referred to as the marriage itself. In one case recorded in 1963, a young couple on completing their registration on the afternoon of Chinese New Year's Eve and obtaining their marriage certificates, returned at once to one another's home to tell their parents that they 'planned to get married the following day' (my emphasis) (ZF,

1 June 1963). The form which the social recognition took ranged from the simplified ceremony in which the couple proclaim themselves to be husband and wife in the presence of their friends and kin at an evening tea party to a more elaborate form which retains many of the traditional customs. The form which social recognition takes in the immediate conscious models combines in varying proportions a mixture of old and new customs. The most commonly retained customs include the use of the bridal sedan chair, the transfer of the dowry, the ritual integration of the bride into the husband's family and the marriage feast.

The bridal sedan chair

A significant feature of the traditional ceremonial was the use of the bridal sedan chair customarily hired by the groom's parents to transport the bride to his home. Only an inferior form of marriage contracted to avoid the expenses of bringing up a daughter or the cost of a marriage ceremony was associated with its absence, and the practice of sending the bridal sedan chair seems to have been one of the more tenacious of the procedures which characterised the traditional marriage ceremonial. In rural areas and as late as 1974 its use was reported in the media (SWB, 21 March 1974). In the case studies the use of the sedan chair was a common cause of conflict both between the generations and between the parties to the negotiations and their kin. Those who supported the custom based their claims on the fact that it was a sign or symbol of a right and proper marriage and it invited public recognition that the ceremonial was being properly conducted, mingmei zhengzhu. In this respect its absence was to be interpreted as a cause for loss of status or 'face', timian. The mother of a son who refused to

be married with the sedan chair followed by a parade of the dowry was very angry that the bride did not even 'have the decency to arrive properly'. She said that she was aware of the advantage of the new ways and all the arguments against the continuation of this old practice, but nevertheless 'what sort of day was it when they had lost face on this greatest of days in one's life' (P's C, 16 June 1949).

Fifteen years later, in the mid-1960s, young couples still came under considerable pressure from their parents to duly celebrate their marriage. In one case, the parents stated that 'as we had a bumper harvest this year we should make the wedding presentable and give the daughter away in the right manner, so that everybody involved can take pride in the event'. The 'right manner' included the use of the sedan chair and in their argument with the younger generation, the parents had much local support. 'People get married only once in a lifetime, it is natural that she should sit in the sedan chair!' The young couple were aware that it was an old custom not encouraged by the new ideological model, but listening to local opinion they became perplexed and uncertain what to do. Under their influence the prospective bride began to feel that if she didn't sit in the sedan chair, people could cite an old saying that without the sedan chair 'goods delivered were just not presentable'. Indeed, it took some convincing to persuade her otherwise (ZQ, 30 January 1964). The two commonly cited reasons for its continuing use seem to centre around the desire to distinguish the occasion from all others by giving it due importance and to avoid arousing gossip and talk. As one mother said to her daughter, 'getting married is something that happens once in a lifetime. It should not be taken lightly. You had better take a sedan chair' (ZQ, 16 January 1966). When a prospective groom suggested to his bride that they arrange an alternative form of transport to the

sedan chair, she responded, 'when other people get married, the bride either sits in a sedan chair or rides a horse and if I walk to your door, people will talk' (ZQ, 19 November 1964).

In the past the use of the bridal sedan chair symbolised the control of the marriage negotiations by the older generation. It played a significant part in the rites of separation by expressing the resistance of the bride to leaving her own home, and it also highlighted the fact that she had been carried to her husband's home at the behest of his parents (Yang, M., 1945: 113). There is some evidence to suggest that the latter symbol of the sedan chair was responsible for its continued use in the 1960s. Young people, and especially brides, colluded in its persistence precisely because it absolved them from a certain amount of responsibility should tension and conflict result from their introduction into the new household. In the past there is evidence to suggest that at the same time as the daughter-in-law was establishing a relationship with her new husband and obtaining a foothold within the household, the mother-in-law was making concerted efforts to maintain the special relationship with her son which she had worked so hard to establish as a means of manipulating control of the affairs of the household and as a guarantee to her security in her old age (Wolf, M., 1972: 35-6). On occasions of complaint or conflict the daughter-in-law could always claim that she had been brought to their door by the sedan chair.

That brides were still wary of losing this defence was illustrated by the following case study, in which the groom persuaded his bride to dispense with the chair on the grounds that they were getting married of their own free will. Their marriage had not been arranged by their parents and therefore she need not now have this defence for 'women had straightened their backs and both mother and daughter-in-law were now masters of their

house' (ZQ, 19 November 1964). In the same year an educational booklet suggested that one of the reasons why the sedan chair was still used could be due to the fact that its abolition gave any mother-in-law the excuse to adminish 'You came to this house on your own two feet', meaning that she had of her own free will walked into that household (Lu Yang, 1964: 34). There is no doubt that where the sedan chair has persisted, it has been in rural areas where marriages are more likely to have been initiated by the older generation and where patrilocal marriage was the norm. Where the sedan chair was dispensed with, and there are no cases cited of its use in urban areas, the bride either walked to the bridegroom's house accompanied by her friends or by the groom himself. Where registration was made on the same day, the parties to the marriage often met at the registration office and then walked from the place of registration to their future home for further celebrations.

The dowry

In traditional times the sedan chair was usually accompanied by a procession of porters carrying the items which made up the dowry. The goods which accompany the bride to her new home are not necessarily now referred to as dowry, jiazhuang, but simply as gifts or presents made by the families and friends of the bride and groom. In rural areas, however, these gifts retain certain characteristics which identify them in effect as the traditional dowry. They are normally provided by the kin of the bride on the grounds that its absence would draw adverse attention to the bride's household and they provide the foundations for the conjugal fund. There are several cases referred to in the media throughout the past twenty-five years. In the 1950s one girl's father intended to sell some

of his stores of rice in order to furnish his daughter with a dowry. He calculated that he would buy her four suits of clothes, two of serge and two of calico, some pieces of furniture, some pots and bowls, mirrors, face powder, soap cases and the like. When his daughter questioned his intentions, he defended the custom saying that 'since you were old enough to work, you've done a great deal for the family. I as your father must be seen to do you justice' (P's C, 16 June 1949). In another case in the mid-1960s, the bride's family set about to sell the fat pigs raised by the family. It was forecast that they would probably fetch 70 to 80 yuan each, which was to be used to buy their daughter a dowry consisting of a dressing table and trunks, wardrobe and some cosmetics for their daughter. When the daughter remonstrated she was informed that this was a matter of prime importance in her life. 'How can your wedding be conducted in the manner you have in mind? If we don't spend some money and provide you with some form of dowry, will not other people laugh at us?' (ZQ, 16 January 1966). In cases citing the persistence of the practice, the overwhelming argument cited in its defence was the contribution to the status and social standing of the bride's family.

Guangdong Province, 1977

In rural areas in Guangdong province in 1977, in every family which I interviewed the bride and groom had been provided with gifts by their parents, and brothers and sisters. These gifts were always composed of the furnishings for their rooms set aside for the use of the conjugal couple. They included a bed, bed clothes, a wardrobe, chest, often a desk and chair and a clock, other substantial items such as a bicycle, sewing machine or a fan and personal articles of clothing. The amount

which the bride's family contributed to the new fund varied substantially between the rural counties of Guangdong and the rural suburbs of Guangzhou. In one county 40 km away from Guangzhou, the groom's parents said that they had contributed 900 to 1000 yuan to both the furnishings and the celebrations in comparison to the bride's family whose expenses ranged from 150 to 300 yuan. Two of the groom's families there specifically stated that they would or had spent less on their daughters at the time of marriage because they had needed or would need all their funds to pay for their sons' marriages. In other suburban communes nearer to Guangzhou, the expenses incurred by both families were more evenly matched and ranged from 300 to 400 yuan for each family. The bride's family provided much of the movable property and the groom's family contributed to the latter and provided for the banquet and celebrations occasioned by the wedding itself. In one case for example the bride contributed a bicycle, and much of the furniture, while the groom's family had bought the bed, some other furniture and the banquet. In another case, the groom's family had contributed the wardrobe, bed and the banquet while the bride's family had contributed a bicycle, a chest and a desk and chairs. Many of the more substantial items such as a bicycle, sewing machine and fan were not in the couple's room but were placed in the sitting room for the common use of the kin of the groom. They were normally identified as the young couple's property and would be taken by them in the event of the division of the household.

In every family visited by the author where there had been a marriage within the last five years or so, the furnishings of the room which the young couple inhabited were a great source of pride. They were without doubt the most elaborately furnished rooms of the household and served as a constant reminder of the total amounts afforded by the kin of the bride

and the groom at the time of the marriage. Each family could quite precisely remember how much was spent and the details of the contributions made by each family. For the kin of the bride there may have been some conflict between the funds that were lost to them and the desire not to lose status, and where there was competition for son's and daughter's marriages, the daughter was seen to have less claim on the familial funds. Normally however the marriages were spaced sufficiently to allow accumulation for the marriage expenses of each member of the family. In several the ability to accumulate in order to meet marriage expenses at all was a privilege once only enjoyed by a few and now gifts were provided for all brides and grooms. One widow with two daughters in their early twenties was saving for the marriages of both her daughters although neither of them had any plans for marriage in the near future. In urban areas the room of the conjugal couple was equally a source of pride, but this reflected on the resourcefulness and thrift of the young couple rather than on the contributions afforded by their families. Normally the young couple had saved up for their marriages themselves and used their individual savings to provide for the furnishings. In one family the bride and groom had used their individual savings to buy clothes and in another they had bought a sewing machine, a bed, a cupboard and bed coverings. In addition each couple had received small gifts in kind and in cash from their kin, friends and fellow-workers. In urban areas the amount used to cover these expenses and the celebrations themselves ranged from about 300 to 600 yuan.

Compared to other customs such as the practice of the betrothal gift, the bridal sedan or wedding feasts, the continued transfer of gifts with all the connotations of the traditional dowry seems to have given less cause for concern on the part of the political authorities. In the new ideological model there is no mention of the dowry, and in the educational

materials the marriages of role models are marked by its absence or it is presented as an outmoded custom which is offered by the parents of the bride but rejected by the bride herself. But interestingly praise has been bestowed on families who retain the form of the dowry, but invest it with a new political and revolutionary significance. In one case a girl was praised for rejecting the dowry offered by her parents. Instead she had claimed that if she were to take a dowry at all it should be composed of revolutionary ideas and farm tools (ZQ, 16 January 1966). Another girl described in the media how she walked unescorted to her husband's home and took with her 'four volumes of the Selected Works of Mao-Tse-tung, two bamboo baskets, a spade and a pick' (RMRB, 24 January 1972). The parents of one bride were praised for their adoption of the new ways and were selected for emulation. They had pondered for quite a long time on the question of a dowry for their daughter and after due consultation they finally came up with the idea of giving her their farm tools, a hoe, a sickle, a pick and a rake, as a kind of dowry for their daughter. The tools were awards which they had won and they hoped that the constant sight and use of tools engraved with the words 'award', 'increase production and practise economy' and 'practise industry and thrift in housekeeping' would remind their daughter and son-in-law of the hopes and expectations of the older generation (ZQ, 24 April 1962). In all these cases the new content of the dowry has been praised for emulation, which is in great contrast to the adverse comment which the reduced form of the betrothal gift to a 'warm pleasantry' had aroused. It may be that, in comparison with the betrothal gifts which is the first in a series of prestations, it is viewed as a counter-prestation and by concentrating efforts in breaking the cycle at its point of initiation, the dowry will automatically disappear with the abolition of the betrothal gift. On the

whole though it seems that it has been invested and is still invested with less meaning than the betrothal gift. It can't be construed as payment for the bride as can the betrothal gift, it expresses and accrues status for the wife-givers and it is instrumental in providing the necessary furnishings for the room set aside for the parties and the basis of their conjugal fund.

The celebration of marriage

The celebrations inviting social recognition of the marriage of the bride and groom were marked by ceremonials which varied from those which were simple and in accord with the new ideological model to those more elaborate which involved a selection of rituals inherited from the traditional ideological model. The new and simple ceremonials emphasised the role of the bride and groom as individuals in a new partnership of equals which was in marked contrast to the traditional ceremonials at which supernatural sanctions had been imported to stabilise the union and integrate the bride into her rightful place in the groom's descent group and immediate household. Many of the immediate conscious models, and especially in the cities, followed closely the suggestions advocated by the new ideological model. In the new ceremonials described in the media, the young people normally stand side by side in the room of the bridegroom's house or a room in the factory which has been specially decorated for the occasion with auspicious symbols including the characters for 'happiness' and 'long life', congratulatory scrolls and couplets presented by friends and relatives, and numerous flowers. Red, the traditional lucky colour worn at weddings, seems to still predominate in the decorations. In a place of honour hangs the portrait of Mao Tse-tung in front of which the

couple either proclaimed themselves man and wife (WC, June 1953) or in some cases they were described as bowing to the portrait three times (ZQ, 19 November 1964). The bowing is reminiscent of bowing to the ancestors or the gods of Heaven and Earth, but now the portrait of Mao Tse-tung, much like that of Sun Yat-sen before 1949, symbolised political rather than religious recognition. It was said to symbolise the commitment of the couple beyond their immediate households and kin groups, to the local and national communities. The new ceremony is symbolic of the fact that now marriage should represent inter-personal relations between an individual man and woman as much part of the community and new society as members of kin groups. At a ceremony described to me by an informant in Guangzhou in 1977, the individual bride and groom made short speeches to each other in front of the assembled guests of kin, friends and fellow-workers. In these they pledged to give mutual support to each other in the spheres of production, livelihood, study and within the household. By these means the ceremony encouraged the individuals to take part and invested the conjugal role with more significance than the relation of the couple to their kin and especially to the bridegroom's parents. Many of the immediate conscious models, however, though they might approximate the new forms, also retained some allusions to traditional supernatural sanctions and marriage as a symbol of inter-group relations.

The general secularisation of the ceremonial outlined in the new ideological model has reduced the sacred character of the ritual, although a number of supernatural sanctions have continued to stabilise the union and guarantee good fortune. Traditionally the day of the celebration of marriage had been selected by a ritual specialist for its auspicious qualities, huangdao jiri. Days which were generally recognised to be specially auspicious included the third, sixth and ninth days of a ten-

day cycle or the second, fifth and eighth days. There is evidence to suggest that this custom is still practised in the 1960s and 1970s. When the Chairwoman of a rural women's association in Shandong province visited one commune to discuss woman work, she was only there for two hours before four young couples had come in for marriage registration. The commune secretary told her that by the Chinese calendar it was the second day of the second month or the double two, and it was often chosen as a day for marriabe (CR, July 1962). The first step in one woman's preparations for her twenty-year-old son's wedding in 1965 was the consultation of a geomancer about the choice of an auspicious date for conducting the wedding. The geomancer specified the sixth day of the ninth moon (lunar calendar) as a 'lucky day' (NFRB, 25 January 1965). The only case study found so far in which there is a conscious rejection of this custom was recorded in 1972 when a leader of the local Youth League intentionally chose the seventh day of the first month of the lunar year because it was a day not traditionally designated to be auspicious (RMRB, 24 January 1972). In rural Guangdong the 'lucky' season for marriages was reported to be around Chinese New Year and Spring Festival. The selection of the marriage date traditionally symbolised the beginning of the preparations for the marriage ceremony itself.

Seldom do the young couple now marry in the presence of the gods or are they introduced to the ancestors at the altar. At the behest of the gods they used to be symbolically knitted together with invisible red and green threads which were believed to bind them together for life. The couple had traditionally been introduced to the ancestors at the altar in order to stress their role in the continuation of the line of descent, and the constant references to fertility reflected the main injunction that it was the purpose of their union to provide descendents. According

to the new ideological model, such injunctions were considered to be no longer relevant in contemporary China where marriage was to be by self-determination and stable through choice. In the case studies it is a rare young couple who either worship heaven or earth, the gods or the ancestors or who even come under parental pressure to do so. There are one or two occasions recorded in the case studies. In 1964 a young couple were described as 'walking to the altar in spanking new outfits', but lack of detail forbids elaboration on what kind of altar (RMRB, 28 June 1964). In one case study a couple described how they had come under pressure to kowtow to the gods of Heaven and Earth (ZQ, 30 January 1964), and another young couple in describing their 'modern new-style wedding' explicitly stated that we 'did not worship our ancestors and the Gods of Heaven and Earth', which may suggest that they wished to differentiate their marriage either from that of traditional times or others of their acquaintance (NFRB, 18 January 1965). There are no references to the multiple symbols of fertility which punctuated the old-style ceremony, although given the value placed on the birth of children, it would be surprising if there were not informal good wishes and references to the birth of future children at some time during the celebrations. Traditionally this first part of the rights of integration, or the introduction of the couple to the ancestors to stress their role in the continuation of the descent group, would be followed by the second part of these rites designed to establish the relation of the couple to the living. This had traditionally emphasised the couple's subordinate place in the hierarchy of family relationships. They had bowed to each person superior in the family, and the bride often served tea to her husband's parents to initiate her into her future role of servitude. Only one case study makes reference to the continuation of these rites. One couple 'paid respects to their elders

by bowing three times to each in turn' (ZQ, 19 November 1964).

The old-style ceremony had often been accompanied by a certain amount of ribaldry and teasing of the bride,* an ordeal through which, now unveiled, she was supposed to remain quite still and serene. The new ceremony was usually accompanied by many speeches, much story telling and good-humoured conversation. Apparently many of the stories, true or purporting to be true, related to the history of the particular couple or the storyteller and was meant to amuse and/or instruct. In nearly all the accounts of new-style weddings a local cadre or leader made a speech listing the advantages of free-choice marriage and of a joyful and frugal wedding. At many, the young couples themselves were asked to describe how they met or of any amusing episode in the history of their attachment. At one new style wedding, the guests reportedly chanted, 'Let the bride tell us how she found her man and how she was wooed' (P's C, 16 June 1949), and one young man reported that the guests had asked him to tell them the story of his 'falling in love with his bride' (ZF, 1 October 1963). If there was a history of romance, this aspect of the festivities could take the form of much teasing and jesting of the couple, and sometimes it was said they were asked to perform physical feats and give evidence of their affection for each other. One guest at a wedding held in 1965 thought this latter aspect reminiscent of the old custom of 'teasing the bride'. He described how the guests teased the bride and groom by asking them to

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* Freedman has noted that during the 'teasing of the bride' two rules of propriety may be broken: the rule that seniors must not behave informally with juniors, and the rule that bars the expression of sexuality in the house. Senior men and women might come into the room to fling idle remarks at the young couple. Old and young might make pointed remarks on the bride's appearance. Bawdy rhymes were often recited and the couple were required on the pain of forfeits to perform ridiculous manouevres and repeat tongue-twisters (1967: 20).

cross together a wooden plank laid across two chairs and to share the same piece of candy and so on. He thought the whole scene was essentially a revival of the former practice of 'teasing the bride' and referred to this new-style wedding as trying to fill new bottles with old wine (NFRB, 25 January 1965).

The marriage feast

Perhaps the most tenacious of the old customs was the association of weddings with a feast or banquet, bai jiuxi, put on by the groom's family for kin, friends and neighbours. In the new ideological model the ceremony was to be followed instead by a tea party for the guests which provided them with light refreshments in the form of tea, candies, cakes and pastries. This was to be the new form which invited social recognition, yet was both simple and frugal. It marked and differentiated the occasion for kin yet was less exclusive in its guest list. Compared to the traditional marriage feast or banquet, which provided the opportunity to reinforce ties of kinship solidarity by demanding their presence in a body and the exchange of gifts, the guest list of the informal tea party is less exclusively kin, and friends and neighbours of both the bride and groom call to partake of refreshments and offer their best wishes. The new tea party was not to be associated with traditional kin obligations or the exchange of gifts. It was less of a financial drain on the resources of the household and the collective productive unit. In one case a simple tea party was cited as costing Y2.80 (ZQ, 19 November 1964) and another as Y7 (RMRB, 28 June 1964). In one village, there had been 36 funerals and 25 weddings held between mid-August 1963 and June 1964, and it was estimated that the brigade had saved over 5,000 catties of

food grain, and more than Y7,000 and 1,000 men and animal working days by observing these occasions in the new and frugal style (RMRB, 28 June 1964).

In the case studies an evening tea party had become a common means of inviting social recognition from kin, neighbours and friends and it has come to characterise the immediate conscious models in many areas of China and especially in the urban social field. One family which I interviewed in Guangzhou had combined both the simple form for friends and fellow-workers and a more elaborate banquet for kin. In the morning they had met with their friends and fellow-workers in their newly decorated rooms and after the meeting they had provided light refreshments for them. Later in the evening, they had held a dinner for close kin of the families, which included the members of the groom's household, his elder brother and sister-in-law and the bride's brothers and sisters (her parents were dead) and the dinner had cost quite a considerable amount of money. In this way they had combined the demands of both models and appropriated the new, but not quite discarded the old forms.

While the large feast may have disappeared as an integral part of the social recognition and celebration of marriage in the urban areas, the provision of the large marriage feast in some rural areas has proved to be one of the more tenacious of the traditional marriage customs. It still characterises the immediate conscious models, although in a reduced form in rural areas of China. In one village, inhabitants were heard to ask, 'What does a wedding look like if a feast is not held?' (Nanfang Ribao, 18 January 1965). In 1965 one villager estimated that holding a feast of 20 to 30 tables was the custom, and a feast of 8 to 10 tables which could cost Y200-300 was the minimum number to maintain the reputation of the household and 'prevent others laughing' (NFRB, 18 January 1965). There

were constant complaints in the media that the cost of these feasts not only exhausted the savings of individual households, but siphoned off the individual surplus into consumption rather than into re-investment in production (RMRB, 26 June 1964). Certainly, ways of meeting these large expenses would have to be planned in the private sector over a period of time. I found families in Guangdong to be saving for marriage expenses even though no marriages were planned or anticipated in the immediate future. In due course livestock would have to be raised and food prepared for the occasion. The media has cited evidence that some families still went into debt by borrowing from kin and friends in order to meet the expenses, and as a result some families were left in financial difficulties which affected the whole household (RMRB, 28 June 1964; ZQ, 19 November 1964). But despite the cost of the feast many families continued to invite their kin and friends and neighbours to partake of a feast or dinner.

In Guangdong in 1977 nearly every family I spoke to mentioned the expense of the wedding feast or banquet. One family said that they had answered the call of the government to spend little and be frugal, so they had held a feast composed of only three tables for close relatives which had cost about Y200! For all the grooms' families interviewed a substantial proportion of the average Y400 they had spent on the marriage had been apportioned to the provision of the feast for relatives and friends of both the bride and the groom. Sometimes the kin of the groom seem to have continued to compose the majority of the guests; in traditional times the marriage was almost always celebrated at the groom's household to which the kin of the bride were not invited. The anthropologist William Geddes analysed the guest lists of two weddings held in Kaihsienkung in the mid-1950s. At one wedding there were eleven guests,

two relatives and nine friends of the groom were gathered together, but no relatives of the bride were present, although maternal kin of the groom's mother were present. At the other, twenty persons were present at the wedding. Ten were friends of the bridegroom, six were relatives of his including maternal relatives, and four were friends of the bride, all of whom came from her village. In both cases the relatives of the groom formed the predominant category of kin, but there were outnumbered by the numbers of friends (Geddes, 1963: 30). In Guangdong in 1977, families spoke of the attendance of a mixture of close relatives of the bride and groom and friends of the young couple. The inclusion of the kin of the bride and friends of the young people themselves indicates a readjustment in affinal relationships and those characteristic of young peer groups.

The marriage feast was one of a series of reciprocal and ceremonial obligations between kin and friends. Traditionally, attendance at a feast carried certain obligations for kin. Each guest was expected to offer a gift the amount of which was normally determined by the proximity of kin or friend (Geddes, 1963: 25). For the groom's family the proffered gifts were expected to partly, or in exceptional cases wholly, offset the costs of the feast and for the kin it was a matter of honour to offer the gifts as 'tokens of human feelings'. A popular saying illustrated that even if a relative has no money he has an obligation to go into debt or even sell the cooking pot to meet this obligation: 'Expression of human feelings is as urgent as repaying a loan and the cooking pot has to be carried on the head to be sold' (ZQ, 19 November 1964). Villagers often proved to be reluctant to break the circle of ceremonial obligations. In one particular case study published in 1964, the groom described the procedures that the arrangement of his impending marriage had set in motion. Relatives and

friends began to call on the family to learn of the wedding date in order that they might prepare the wedding presents. All of them were certain that they were to attend a wedding feast, and in anticipation, some of them borrowed money while others withdrew a portion of their savings from the credit co-operative. One cousin who was short of money borrowed 45 yuan from the credit co-operative and another relative sold his suckling pig for Y18 to be used for 'gift packets'. Although the prospective groom told them repeatedly that no dinner party would be given, they just would not believe his word, for according to old customs and practices a large dinner would always be given on the occasion of a marriage and relatives and friends of the family were required to offer their gifts (ZQ, 19 November 1964). Another case was reported in the same year in which the cadres and workers of a commune factory, on hearing that a fellow-worker was to give a wedding feast, went to choose gifts to take with them. Some chose bottles of wine, chickens and other kinds of food, and others presented red gift-packets of money or lishi. Talking about the custom later, many of the workers in the factory defended it on the grounds that 'when a kinsman or friend gets married, it would be impolite and people will talk if we do not give any presents and do not attend a feast' (RMRB, 20 November 1972). It has been suggested that the receiving of presents was a factor encouraging wedding feasts and there are a few references in the early 1960s to cases where hosts in positions of authority actually made a profit (Chen and Ridley, 1969: 109).

Above all, though, the persistence of the feast was due to its traditional function as a status symbol in the local community and its appropriation by the socially mobile to advertise their new status. There is no doubt that for many peasants, the feast has provided an opportunity to display newly-found subsistence, surplus and security

gained since 1949. The parents of one groom planned to make their son's wedding impressive and planned a considerable fanfare. They said, 'We lived in a straw hut by the river when we were young. Conditions now have improved. As the eldest of our three sons is getting married, we have to make the wedding impressive and in the appropriate style of a household having achieved self-sufficiency' (ZQ, 24 April 1962). As the single most important occasion alongside funerals, the elder villagers have displayed a remarkable capacity to remember the details of every banquet within a generation. The following case study suggests that a reputation dented by the absence of celebration might not be righted before the marriages of the next generation. One young groom, who was determined to conduct his wedding frugally, found his parents more adamant than most in their insistence that they must give a big feast of 25 tables to entertain their relatives and friends. They had already planned for the occasion and raised two head of fat pig and twenty to thirty chickens and ducks to 'conduct a presentable and well-attended wedding for their son'. His father said to him that 'there is only one marriage in a man's life-time and it is therefore worthwhile to be wasteful just for once, and that he should know!' When he himself had come to the village to be married, he had given a small wedding party due to lack of money. Local gossip in the village described him as 'miserly', lacking in generosity and he was accused of having 'brought disrepute to the family'. The gossip was not quietened until he had borrowed 35 pieces of silver from the landlord for another small dinner of several tables. Now he felt the family was living well with their own supplies of food, pigs, chickens, ducks, and had practically everything they wanted and could afford to give a large feast. But even without their present prosperity he thought they would have had to borrow to give a big wedding banquet for they could 'no longer stand

the ridicule of other people that our family is miserly and not generous' (ZQ, 19 November 1964).

Elaborate feasts had long been associated with households in positions of authority in the village such as those of landlords or government officials, and some of those in new positions of authority in the village thought that they likewise should appropriate the old symbols of status. The feast had long provided an opportunity for the rich and powerful to differentiate themselves from the rest of the community. As one of the most important ritual occasions for indulging in conspicuous consumption, a marriage had provided a unique occasion to advertise wealth and status. The Lienchang documents for the early 1960s suggest that in Lienchang and at a time of general food shortage the problem of extravagant feasting was more likely to be found among the cadres than among the other villagers. One case was cited where a brigade leader had arranged a thirty-four tabled feast when his daughter was married and another was reported to have held an eighteen-tabled feast (Chen and Ridley, 1969: 107, 192). There have been several other cases where cadres have been criticised in the media for 'investing in pomp and holding grand feasts' in order to attract the esteem of others (e.g. NFRB, 18 January 1965, 25 January 1965).

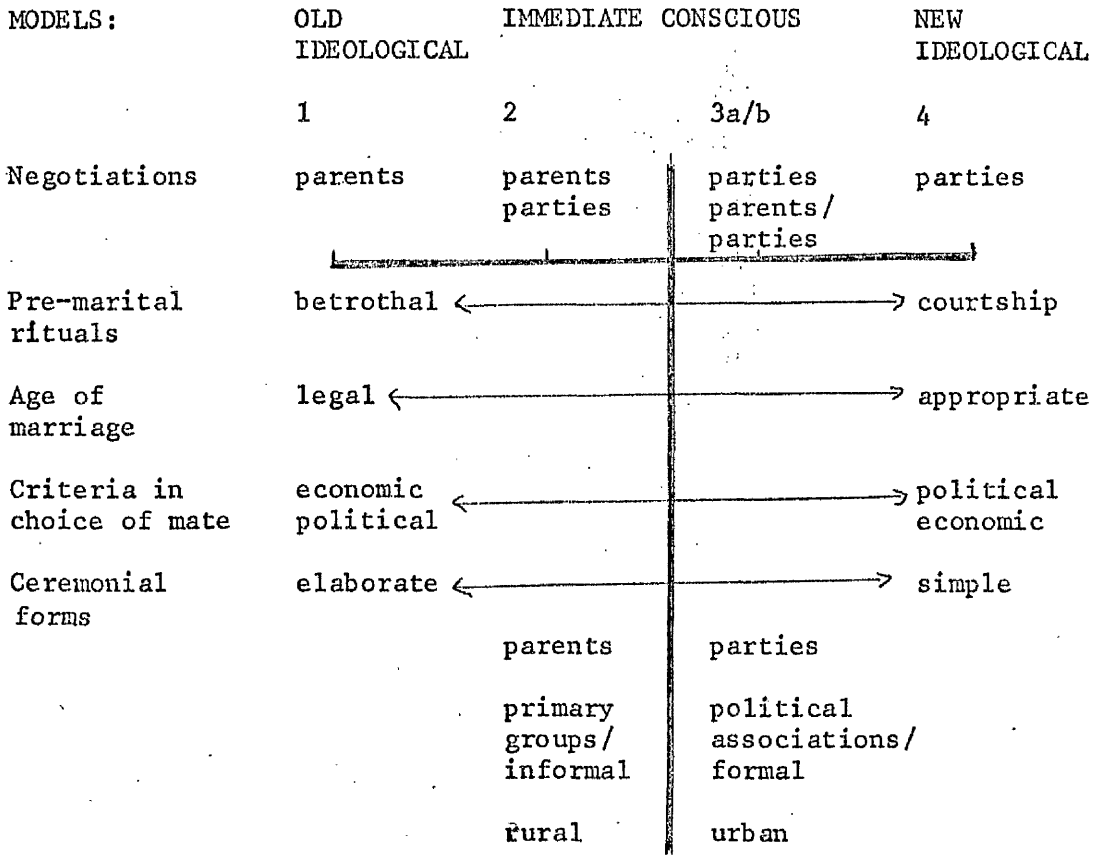
In nearly every case recorded, those who still followed the old customs were aware of the contents of the new ideological model and often of its economic advantages, For example, after attendance at a simple evening tea party to celebrate with the bride and groom, one participant commented that 'little is spent and that much (pleasure) is got in return, this surely is a good way of celebrating a marriage' (RMRB, 28 June 1964). But despite the consciousness of the economic advantages and the meanings of the relations they symbolised, some of the old customs

remained influential in determining the immediate conscious models and especially in rural areas. Where they survived and where social recognition continued to be invited in elaborate forms, they were often the occasion of conflict between the generations and between the personal or informal and political or formal social fields.

The negotiations of marriage

At each stage in the procedures of the negotiation of marriage there has been a close correlation between the form which the negotiations take and the procedures characterising pre-marital rituals, choice of marriage partner, age of marriage and ritual and ceremonial forms. So that where parents monopolise the negotiations there is more likely to be a betrothal, a lower age of marriage, a homogamous or hypergamous marriage and elaborate ceremonial forms. Likewise, where the young people themselves monopolise the negotiations of marriage, there is more likely to be a period of courtship, a higher age of marriage, there is a possibility of heterogamy and simple ceremonial forms. Between these two poles, the new immediate conscious models derive from patterns of social behaviour evolved in the last two decades to mediate the competition between the old and new ideological models. In evaluating the weight given to the old and new ideological models in the syncretic immediate forms, the main dividing line on the continuums drawn up in Figure 9 coincides with the point at which the parties take over the initiation of the negotiations. All the available evidence points to the fact that this point tends to roughly coincide with the division into rural and urban social fields and the support or dominance of the informal and formal social field.

Figure 9: Patterns in the Negotiation of Marriage: the People's Republic of China



Insofar as people deliberately seek to influence the behaviour of others through directing the flow of women within society, we can speak of the politics of marriage. The deliberate circulation of women in particular directions by groups acting to their advantage has long been familiar to historians (Thrupp, 1948; Habbakuk, 1955) and anthropologists (Cohen, A., 1970). Anthropologists have located the study of marriage patterns within the distribution and maintenance of power between individuals and groups of various compositions at national, lineage and village levels. In the absence of certain types of data it has not been possible in this study to ascertain the exact patterns of marriage and distribution

of power between individuals, kin groups and political parties at a national, local or even village level, but it has been possible to identify two arenas of competition for control of the marriage patterns. The younger generation has competed with the older generation for the control of the negotiation of marriage, and primary or kin groups have competed with political associations for the control of marriage patterns. The greater weighting given to the traditional ideological model in the syncretic immediate conscious models in the rural social field required both the connivance of the parents and the parties in the maintenance of traditional patterns of controls. The greater weighting given to the new ideological model in the urban social field required that the younger generation take control of the negotiations. In the implicit or explicit bargaining process between the younger and older generations the sanctions at the disposal of each will determine the form which the immediate conscious models take.

The next two chapters of the thesis seek to examine two related questions: What factors encourage the older generation, especially in the rural areas, to keep the initiative in marriage negotiations and withhold their consent should they lose this initiative, and secondly why should young people, especially in the rural areas, allow their parents the right to initiate their marriage negotiations, or if they acquire this initiative feel parental consent to be necessary to the conclusion of the marriage negotiations? In answer to these questions it can be argued that there are very real structural reasons why the old ideological model should persist and dominate the immediate conscious models in rural areas. Primarily these have to do with the structure and function of the household or domestic group and the nature of primary groups in rural areas. This thesis puts forward two hypotheses. For the

first, a qualitative examination of the data suggests that the degree of parental participation, or the continuing influence of the old ideological model, in the negotiation of marriage, is directly correlated to the structure and function of the household. In the second hypothesis, the degree of parental participation, or influence of the old ideological model, in the negotiation of marriage varies directly with the degree to which households are encapsulated by overlapping primary groups or influenced by the informal field over the formal field. The potential or real opposition between successive generations for the control of marriage negotiations operates firstly within the internal structure of the domestic group.

CHAPTER 9

MARRIAGE AND THE DOMESTIC GROUP

This chapter sets out to assess the degree to which the household contributes to the maintenance of the traditional ideological model in rural areas, the extent to which the current concept acts as part of the ideology and becomes itself an instrument of dominance and control over the younger generation through the relations of dependence established within its boundaries. In strengthening the marital bond as opposed to all other kin bonds, the new ideological model attempts to redefine marriage to form an institution symbolising the relations between two individuals or equal partners and not that between two households or kin groups. However, marriage is not simply defined as the 'social form of the union between two sexes'. At the same time its purpose is described as providing the foundation of the 'basic social cell of society' or the domestic group (ZQ, 16 December 1956). The form which the domestic group takes has wide repercussions for the institution of marriage and it can be argued that the boundaries and structure of the domestic group and the socio-economic functions assigned to it in contemporary rural China are such that the two aims combined in the very definition of marriage - as a relationship between two freely chosen and equal individuals of the opposite sex and as the foundation of the domestic group - stand in contradiction to one another. That is, the form which the domestic group takes in rural areas has encouraged the older generation to retain their controls over the negotiations of marriage.

In contemporary China the domestic group is defined as 'mainly a unit of life in which the husband and wife share their married life together, rear and educate their children and care for their elder near

relatives together' (PR, 13 March 1964). The implications of this new definition for the structure of the domestic group are far from clear, for the new ideological model seems to have left the projected forms which the residential group or family formation should take rather vague. Virilocal marriage or the recruitment of wives to the domestic group in which the husband resided prior to marriage was widely practised in traditional China and nowhere are new rules of post-marital residence explicitly stated. Rather, the domestic group or household is said 'to stem from the marital bond for either it functions to establish a new household completely or it perpetuates an old household for a further generation' (Lu Yang, 1964: 7). On the one hand the strengthening of the marital bond above all other familial bonds might suggest the establishment of a conjugal household, and in educational materials advocating the rise in the age of marriage, marriage is almost by definition seen to require the establishment of an independent economic base for the livelihood of the couple and their children. The allocation of new housing to young couples in the urban areas where there was no acute shortage of supply seems to assume the establishment of a neolocal household rather than the incorporation of the new marriage partners into a larger economic unit such as the joint family. Indeed, anthropologists who have studied the family, domestic group or household in contemporary China have argued for a rise in the number of households of the conjugal type.

On the other hand the recommendation that uxorilocal marriage becomes a normal form of residence alternative to virilocal marriage assumes the former and future maintenance of a joint or extended household of either type. In the recent campaign to provide the equality of women in the movement to criticise Confucius and Lin Piao (1973-5), the

population has been encouraged to learn from those Party committees who have promoted uxorilocal marriage as a normal form of post-marital residence. They supported any groom who chose to settle in his wife's family after marriage on the grounds that men and women were now equal in marriage, and that the births of girls could be as advantageous to the future of the rural household as those of boys. Parents of daughters need no longer fear for their future for the new custom broke with the traditional idea that boys were the only means by which spouses might be recruited into the household on marriage (SWB, 30 January 1975; 11 February 1975). The establishment of these new residential patterns was designed to break with the old virilocal post-marital residential patterns, but in this case neither the old or the new advocated neolocal marriage. Certainly in both rural and urban areas, both generations have been advised to care for each other and redefine their relationship in order to reduce areas of tension within the household however it is defined (M. Law, 1950; RMRB, 9 February 1957). The current concept of the household or domestic group is a very weak part of the new ideological model.

The new definition of the household omits any references to its property base or the socio-economic functions which have characterised the traditional domestic group in China and which underlie the usual anthropological definitions of the domestic group. In common these definitions identify the domestic group as the 'housekeeping unit organised to provide the material and cultural resources needed to maintain and bring up its members' (Fortes, 1971: 8), 'the dwelling unit, the reproductive unit and the economic unit' (Goody, 1972: 106) and the 'residential unit, the unit of production, consumption and reproduction' (Sahlins, 1974: 76-100). In comparison to its policy on residential

patterns, the government in China is clear in its aim to reduce the socio-economic functions of the domestic group. In the 1950s a number of policies were designed and introduced in China to collectivise the means of production and remove the property basis of the domestic group. In urban areas the establishment of joint state-private enterprises, craft and other productive co-operatives and neighbourhood factories were all introduced to replace the domestic group as the unit of production. In rural areas, policies were designed to gradually collectivise the land, collectively organise production and many subsidiary occupations (see Perkins, 1969; Schran, 1969). With the establishment of communes, the production brigade and the production team became the effective owners of the means of production, and formed the basic units of accounting, planning and distribution of incomes. In both rural and urban areas it was anticipated that the establishment of collective consumer services such as common dining facilities, child care, laundry, food processing and other services would mean that a large part of consumption would not take place by and within the individual household. Social scientists outside China were quick to foresee the implications of these policies for the structure and functions of the domestic group. They suggested that by taking out the last vestiges of private land ownership and management, the commune has destroyed the estate or economic basis of the joint family (Cohen, M., 1976: 231) or the traditional peasant family (Lethbridge, 1962: 380). The payment of individual wages, collectivisation of land and the collective organisation of production were all interpreted as weakening the control of the older generation to control marriage negotiations (Yang, C., 1959: 39pp; Goode, 1963: 301-2, 313). However, despite the new definition of the domestic group and the policies designed to reduce its economic basis, the evidence suggests that its

traditional structure remains largely unchanged in rural households. Moreover, these same characteristics both encourage the older generation to control the marriage negotiations and place certain resources and sanctions at their disposal.

The household

In both rural and urban areas the basic unit of domestic organisation is the household, hu, which was characterised in the field situation as the group of kin relations distinguished by a common budget and single kitchen. It may or may not coincide with the family, jia or jiating, which seems to have been a relative term with many uses in the past (Osgood, 1963: 355-6) as it also has in the present. In my interviews the term jia or family was often used to refer to the members of a particular household, or it might refer to members of the household plus those related by blood who were not identified as present members of the household such as married sons and daughters who had their own separate households or unmarried sons and daughters who were temporarily resident elsewhere. Members of a household did not always share a common residence and households displayed some variation in the dispersal of their residential arrangements (see Figure 14 in Appendix 7.). In rural and urban areas it seems that the average size of household may not have changed very much. Taeuber has analysed a hitherto unpublished 1929 survey of 38,256 farm families in 22 provinces of China and found that the average family size was 5.2 persons (1970: 71), and her figures are corroborated by those of other anthropologists who place the average family size within the range of 4 to 6 persons (Yang, 1959: 7). In Guangdong province the figures collected during my interviews show little variation:

Table 11: Average Size of Household: Guangdong 1977

LOCALITY	NUMBER OF PERSONS	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	AVERAGE SIZE HOUSEHOLD
Jiang village	147	27	5.44
No.11 Production team	250	55	4.54
Huadong commune	63,200	13,400	4.71
Yue village	585	145	4.03
Jenho commune	73,532	15,568	4.70
Haomei village	480	110	4.40
Dali commune	68,000	15,900	4.30

However, the average size masks the range and variations in the size of any one household at different points in its developmental cycle and the differences between the rural and urban social fields.

In rural areas post-marital residence is still generally virilocal. Marriage immediately occasions the expansion of the domestic group and the establishment of stem and joint families although it eventually also precipitates fission, fenjia, and its concomitant economic partition. Normally, however, the latter takes place some time after marriage and its timing very much depends on factors internal to the domestic group. If the husband is the only son, then division is rarely likely to take place at all, whereas if he has brothers, and if he is the eldest, he will be more likely to separate than if he is the younger son. Moreover, the division may not take place until several children have been born to the married couple. In Jiang village in Guangdong this was very much the pattern.

Jiang village

Post-marital residence patterns continued to take the virilocal form and the formation of conjugal households was coincident with household division rather than marriage. Conjugal households were rarely established before the birth of the third child or the occasion of the second son's marriage. The most common explanation given for family division was the present size of the household, and this was often expressed in terms of the number of tables required for eating, and division often seems to have coincided with an increase to more than one table. At any time in the rural social field there were households which were of the conjugal, stem or joint form depending on their stage in the developmental cycle.

In Jiang village, where I interviewed members of every household, there were in April 1977 17 conjugal families and 10 stem families (see Table 12). At the time of the interviews there were no joint family households, although with the imminent marriage of a second son, one household was about to take the joint form. Several of the households had been joint family structures in the recent past, but family division had caused their break up into conjugal and stem households. This pattern corresponds to Levy's claims that in traditional China new families were most commonly formed through the famille souche pattern of division which creates conjugal families and maintains stem families (1949: 55-6). Both Lang (1946: 15-16) and Levy (1949: 55) have noted that in traditional China it may have been quite common for stem families to maintain themselves for many years. They pointed out that poverty and poor health care may have left many families with only one son surviving to maturity in each generation. Now, however, it seems likely that the improvements in diet, health and welfare services have lengthened the life-span in the

Table 12: Household Composition: Jiang Village

HOUSEHOLD CODE NO.	NUMBER OF PERSONS	STRUCTURE: Conjugal	Stem	RESIDENCE Concentrated	Dispersed
1	7		✓		✓
2	5	✓		✓	
3	6		✓		✓
4	6		✓	✓	
5	8		✓		✓
6	4	✓		✓	
7	6	✓		✓	
8	6		✓	✓	
9	7	✓			✓
10	4	✓		✓	
11	5	✓		✓	
12	6	✓			✓
13	3	✓		✓	
14	5	✓		✓	
15	5		✓		✓
16	4	✓		✓	
17	3	✓		✓	
18	5	✓			✓
19	7		✓	✓	
20	6		✓	✓	
21	9		✓		✓
22	4	✓			✓
23	5		✓	✓	
24	3		✓	✓	
25	7	✓			✓
26	5	✓			✓
27	6	✓			✓

Continued

The following summary shows the number of households of a particular structure and form of residence. Figures in brackets show the average numbers of persons in households of a particular structure or residential form.

TYPE OF RESIDENCE:	Concentrated	Dispersed
STRUCTURE OF HOUSEHOLD:		
Conjugal	10 (4.5)	7 (5.7)
Stem	5 (5.4)	5 (7.0)

last twenty-five years and increased the number of surviving sons. In Jiang village an average of 2.5 sons had survived per mother over the age of 40 when child-bearing could reasonably be expected to have ceased. While opportunities for migration to the cities remain very limited, it would appear that demographic factors may have contributed to a new vertical and horizontal proliferation of the generations in close proximity if not within the same household. The joint phase of the developmental cycle may serve a unique opportunity to specialise and diversify the economy of the domestic group and accumulate wealth immediately prior to division.

In contrast, in urban areas post-marital residential patterns are generally neolocal with the formation of conjugal type households on marriage. In principle, housing is allocated by municipal authorities on a neolocal basis, although where there is a housing shortage as there has been in some of the larger cities, young couples may live with the parents of one of the spouses, usually the groom's. But even in this situation, there is the implicit assumption that common residence will

be of a limited duration until separate housing can be provided. At a later date, however, the parents of either spouse, perhaps on the death of one of the marriage partners, may move in with their son or daughter and the household will move from the conjugal to the stem form. It seems that the developmental cycle in the domestic group may pass through different sequences in rural and urban areas. In the rural areas the maintenance of the traditional structures can be attributed to socio-economic factors specific to the rural household.

The household estate

Anthropologists who have studied the forms which the domestic group has taken in China have argued that the key factor in its maintenance as a complex, and especially joint form has been the existence of an estate sufficient in size to meet the claims of its members (Freedman, 1958: 30; Cohen, M., 1971: 231). This has been the crucial characteristic distinguishing the forms which the domestic group traditionally took for different social classes, mainly the gentry and the peasantry (Fei, 1946). The jia estate has been defined as that body of holdings, such as lands, residences, household effects, farm tools and livestock to which the process of family division is applicable (Cohen, 1976: 59). The Chinese Communist Party too has identified private property as the primary economic foundation of the domestic group in the past and the abolition of the land component of the estate has been a priority of the government since the mid-1950s. Before this time, the government had introduced the policies of land reform and supervised the redistribution of land on an equable basis to individual households. At the time of the introduction of the new forms of marriage, then, it may be that land reform not only did not abolish

the land component of the estates, but actually strengthened the property base of the domestic group in rural areas. The government had initially forecast that only land reform could lay the social and economic foundations for the implementation of the new ideological model by giving all members of the domestic group, and especially women and the young, access to ownership of the means of production and a new bargaining power. Several articles in the media suggested that the redistribution of land and new and equal inheritance laws would create the objective conditions for the implementation of the new ideological model of marriage negotiations by providing the basis for economic independence and freedom of choice for the younger generation. The new Marriage Law could only be carried out successfully after land reform had destroyed the economic basis for filial obedience (P's C, 1 June 1951; 1 March 1953). These articles argued that without the means of economic independence, the Marriage Law itself would not have been practicable among the rural population.

But it can also be argued that the redistribution of land actually strengthened the property basis of the small peasant productive unit, especially for the rural peasant household hitherto landless, and contributed to the authority of the head of the household. Land reform strengthened the land component of the jia estate and its exploitation maximised the functionality of the domestic group as a unit of production and with it the sanctions at the disposal of the household head rather than the resources at the command of the younger generation. Within the domestic group individual claims to the land often remained more potential than real and often they held land in name only for the younger generation and especially the women had little experience in organising agricultural production (Davin, 1976: 116; Croll, 1978). The fact that women may now

bring a share of land with them in marriage, or the household may be allocated a further share of land on the marriage of one of its sons, only served to strengthen the resolve of the head of the domestic group to consolidate its property base through the timely negotiation of marriage of one of his sons. Although the case studies reveal no direct correlation between the redistribution of land and marriage forms, the tremendous hostility with which the new marriage reforms were initially greeted has been well documented (see Chapter 10), and it may be that in the early 1950s these new economic forces did not encourage or even actively discouraged the older generation from relinquishing their monopoly of marriage negotiations. However, this situation was short lived, for it was somewhat altered by the collectivisation of agricultural land and its removal from the direct control of the individual domestic group in the mid-1950s. The policies of collectivisation had the effect of reducing the land component of the individual jia estate and the economic basis of the individual household. However, certain socio-economic factors specific to the rural household have continued to encourage the older generation to control the negotiations of marriage.

The resources of the household

The economic organisation of China demands that the rural household continue to mobilise its resources in order to find solutions to a number of organisational problems, namely production and the transformation of materials for consumption. Despite a number of policies to reduce the socio-economic functions of the rural household, it is still a unit of production although greatly reduced in scope, and because community services are very unevenly distributed in rural areas it is also the

primary unit of consumption. The economy of the domestic group no longer relies on the exploitation of the jia lands or estate but on the paid and unpaid labour of each member of the domestic group. In any society where labour forms the major part of the total means of production and where controls over labour is the major source of social differentiation, the recruitment and reproduction of labour power itself is in constant demand. Where the individual and private hiring of agricultural labour is prohibited by law, as it is within the People's Republic of China, then marriage becomes not only one of the major means of the direct recruitment of labour power but also the necessary component for its reproduction.

In the rural areas access to and the organisation of labour is necessary to combine the three sectors of the economy: the income-earning contribution from the public or collective sectors of the economy, the sideline activities of the private sector of the economy and the non-economic earning contribution within the domestic sphere. In the collective sector of the economy the welfare of the family is very much dependent on the ratio of wage earners to dependants within the household and whether the wage earners are male or female. The households of Jiang village ranged from those in which the members of the domestic group were all wage earners to those in which there were only two wage earners to four wage dependants (see Table 15 in Appendix 3). The recruitment of a daughter-in-law immediately added a wage-earner to the domestic group at a time when it might be saving for additional housing and preparing for eventual division. In the private sector, the household is still an important unit of production. The private sector includes not only private plots which comprise 4-5 per cent of the total area of collectively-owned land, and is allocated on a per capita basis and hence expands with marriage, but it also provides most of the vegetables for the consumption

within the household and its livestock. In addition to these plots, the private sector also includes activities such as pig and chicken raising and the gathering of fuel, which are traditionally defined as women's tasks. These compose an important food resource and cash contribution to the household economy. Domestic labour involving the transformation of produce for consumption such as grinding corn, preserving vegetables, sewing and cooking and child care is an important contribution by women to the household economy which reduces the costs of its maintenance.

Although there were important attempts in the middle and late 1950s to establish communal nurseries for child care and community dining rooms to reduce the functions of the individual household and its labour requirements, these were not always uniformly established or maintained with equal success. In the rural areas most of the community dining rooms did not survive the Great Leap Forward and although nurseries for child care have met with more success, it is my own impression and that of others that these are usually for children from three years upwards and they are by no means universally established in rural villages. For instance, Ruth Sidal was told that even in communes with many regular nurseries, half or more of the children stay with grandparents (1972: 84-5, 124-5).

The performance of all these activities within the collective, private and domestic spheres, primarily continues to rely on the distribution of the labour power of the individual household between the three sectors, the recruitment and self-exploitation of women's labour power and the interdependence of the generations.

Within the domestic group the principal divisions of labour are sexual and generational. Chayanov has suggested that the aim of the domestic group as a unit of production is household consumption, and

thus peasant production is not exploitative of others, but it is rather based on a certain degree of invisible labour which he terms 'self-exploitation' (1966: xvi). The domestic group in China today is a much reduced unit of production compared to other peasant societies, but a certain degree of 'self-exploitation' remains necessary to its maintenance. Women are not only essential for the biological reproduction of labour, but their own labour is crucial to all three sections of the economy: the collective, the private and the domestic. In the collective sectors women are wage earners like men and although the types of work which each undertakes may differ, each contributes to the collective economy. In rural areas, although some women were recruited into rural industries, women often formed a high proportion of the local agricultural labour force. In Jiang village, for example, all but one of the women worked in agriculture in the production team.

Occupations: Men and Women in Labour Force, Jiang village

	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
Agricultural production team	26	38	64
Other occupations outside team	13	1	14
Barefoot doctor	1		1
	40	39	79

In the production team of which Jiang village was part, thirty of the women members from the village were wives who had been recruited into the village and ten were daughters who had yet to marry out. Except for a few older women who worked part-time, all the women worked a full day, although they worked 24 compared to men's 26 days per month.

In the private sector women normally raised the pigs and chickens and often tended to the vegetables of the private plots, and despite attempts to redefine the division of labour within the household,* much of the domestic labour such as washing, mending, cooking, child minding, is still regarded as women's work. At particular stages in a woman's life cycle their labour power tends to be distributed in favour of the domestic and private sector. It is a common occurrence for the recruitment of a new daughter-in-law, or wage earner in the collective sector, to release the women of the older generation to manage the side occupations of the private sector and undertake with the help of the younger generation domestic labour and child care. The self-exploitation of the family labour in the peasantry has as its basis the exploitation of the labour of women and to a greater extent of that of the women of the older generation. Indeed, the demands of the economy of the domestic group contribute to the economic interdepence of the generations within the household. In the absence of State pensions in rural areas, the elders are dependent on the wage labour of the young while the young are dependent on the older generation for their unpaid labour in the domestic and private sectors of the economy. In comparison to rural areas, the demands for invisible labour or the self-exploitation of family members is much reduced in urban areas.

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* To reduce the sexual division of labour and accommodate domestic labour, men have been encouraged to undertake an equal share of the housework. Numerous role models have been published in the media of men who previously indulged in patriarchal attitudes and dismissed housework as women's work, but who with the encouragement of trade union and women's groups have discarded these attitudes and now undertake their share (CR, June 1975). This policy seems to have had some results in the urban areas and among the younger generation, but in 1973 articles began appearing in the media suggesting that the division of labour within the household and especially in rural areas has altered little, both because of 'limited material conditions and the influence of male supremacy' (Hongqi, 1 December 1973).

The contrasting socio-economic functions of the household in rural and urban areas can be said to have given rise to a new dual familial form in contemporary China. The main differences in residential patterns is not that between social classes as formerly (see Chapter 2), but between urban and rural social fields and the structure of the household in each can be correlated directly to their respective socio-economic functions. In urban areas where there is a minimal, if non-existent, private sector of the economy, and where there are institutionalised State and community provisions for retirement and to service and share in the maintenance of the household, the functionality of the household lessens. It is less a unit of production and consumption and the residential patterns tend towards those of the nuclear or conjugal type at the time of marriage. In rural areas where the individual household is still called on to maximise its resources in order to perform a number of socio-economic functions, then marriage is generally virilocal. Each form has repercussions for the negotiation of marriage, and it is for the mobilisation of its resources and especially for the recruitment and reproduction of labour, that the marriage negotiations have remained under the control of the older generation in rural areas.

The recruitment of women

One of the most common explanations or rationalisations given by the parents in initiating marriage negotiations was that cited in terms of the recruitment of additional labour power, usually a woman's, to maintain the household as an economic unit. In Liuling village where Myrdal did his second study in the late 1960s, there was little opposition to one twenty-

year-old girl's marriage because her father was in ill-health and she was the only wage-earner. The village leaders defended their condonement of the match on the grounds that in these circumstances it would not have been right to suggest that they postpone their marriage in line with current educational programmes in the village (Myrdal and Kessle, 1973: 111). In the 1970s in Upper Felicity village, one set of parents at the time of initiating the negotiations for the elder of several children said that they were negotiating the marriage early as they would be glad of a daughter-in-law's help (Chen, 1973: 80). This rationale is particularly explicit in cases where the father or mother has died leaving many young family members. In these circumstances the elder son might well be urged to marry in order that a daughter-in-law might contribute wages or maintain and service the household. One medical student in just such a situation wrote to Zhongguo Qingnian for advice. His mother had died leaving his father, himself and a younger brother and sister. On his return home during the winter vacation, his father indicated to him that they were greatly in need of a housewife in the family as cooking and cleaning 'gave them a great headache'. To have someone manage the household, his father asked him to take a wife as a solution to the problem. Friends and relatives supported the father in his request, and the son in a quandary turned to local political associations for help in finding a way out of his dilemma. The political associations supported him in his refusal and suggested that the other members of the household themselves share and undertake the domestic chores (12 February 1963). It may be that the parents of daughters, and particularly widows, feeling their future security in a patrilocal marriage system to be doubly vulnerable, initiated negotiations for a matrilocal marriage to ensure the recruitment of an individual agreeable to uxorilocal residence. Certainly some households

with a low ratio of wage earners to dependent sons and daughters opted for a reverse solution and married their young daughters out, thus immediately reducing the number of wage dependants. In two cases quoted in Zhongguo Funu parents initiated marriage negotiations with a wealthy family who would be able to meet the cost of their daughter's education and her living expenses in order to lighten their present 'family burden' (1 May 1964).

That girls of marriageable wage were valued for their labour power is illustrated by the value placed on their labour by the payment of the betrothal gift. In Chapter 5 the most common explanation given for its persistence was that it took the form of compensation to the girl's family for the expenses of her upbringing and loss of her labour. Many parents stated that after years of raising a daughter they ought to be able to get something if not a handsome sum in return. Those who thought the amount of the betrothal gift too small complained that they were getting a small return for raising and bringing up a daughter. One indignant parent objected to such small returns on the grounds that they would have received more for the exchange of a pig. In rural households parents of daughters still expected to be compensated for the expenses associated with the upbringing of a daughter and the loss suffered by the bride's household in marriage.

The economic pressures in favour of the early biological reproduction of the labour force was an important factor favouring the early initiation of marriage procedures by the older generation in rural areas. Although it is usually couched in terms of their personal satisfaction at the birth of a grandson and the folk sayings 'to find a wife for one's son early enables one to live in comfort early', it is clear that practical considerations underlie these sentiments. One correspondent to Congren Ribao

suggested that although he was only twenty-three years of age there were advantages in him getting married now. Not only could he and his wife work, but his parents who were still in their early fifties could also work. Moreover, by the time his parents retired, his own children would be nearing the age of entry into social production. He thought that there certainly was some truth in the folk saying: 'Plant seedlings early and you will harvest a rice crop early; have a daughter-in-law early and you will enjoy happiness early' (11 September 1962). The advantages, if not necessity, to reproduce labour power at an early age is nowhere more explicitly stated than in a discussion reported by Parish between peasants and a young educated youth who, in line with the new ideological model, recommended that they got married at a later date. The peasants hurriedly retorted that he just did not understand their problem. If they waited until they were thirty years old then when they were fifty years old their first son would barely be old enough to be an able-bodied labourer, and what if they got sick or ill in the meantime, or if for some reason there was no adult to support the household, then its members would just sink into poverty (1975: 618). For economic reasons alone they felt they had to encourage the members of their household to marry at or as near the legal age as possible. In rural areas the opportunities offered by the negotiation of marriage to maximise the socio-economic resources of the household have not only encouraged the older generation to retain their authority and controls, but the structure and functions of the domestic group have also placed sanctions at the disposal of parents which are not available to their urban counterparts.

The provision of housing

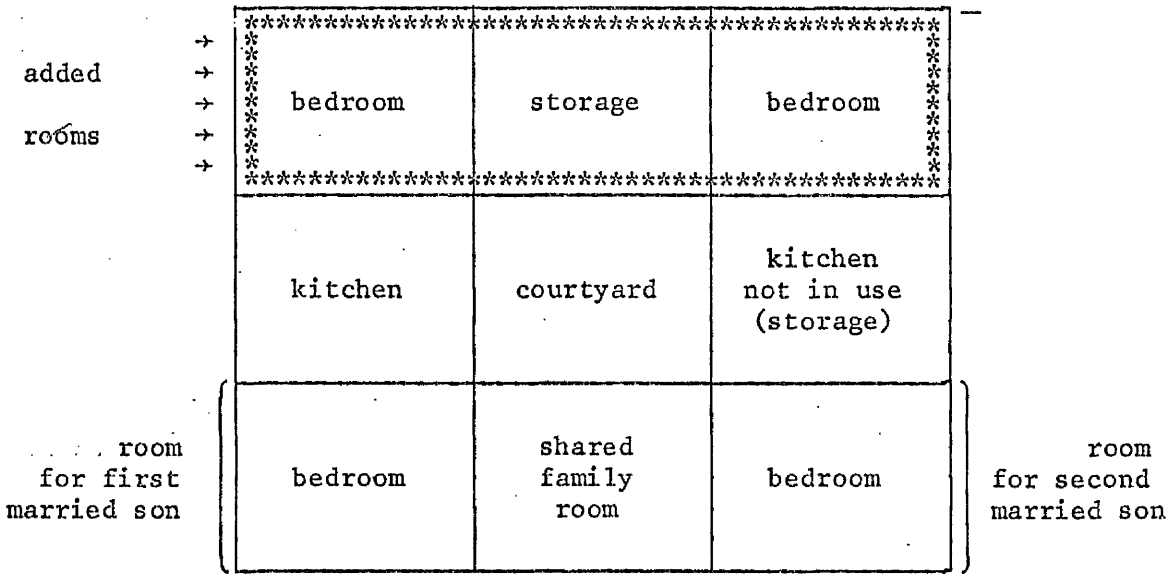
Although the collectivisation of land has removed the land component of the jia estate, it continues to include residences, household effects, farm tools and small numbers of livestock. The sixty Articles governing communes states that peasants shall own their own tools and house as well as have the right to buy, sell or rent their house and according to the laws of inheritance pass it on to their children. Out of this estate the older generation is expected to make provision for the members of the younger generation and their spouses on marriage. In the rural areas where virilocal marriage is the norm, young couples are almost entirely reliant for the provision of housing on the resources of the groom's household or on the bride's household in the event of uxorilocal marriage. Normally it is the groom's household which rearranges the residential arrangements of the domestic group to make provision within their own house for the newly married couple. Alternatively, they might use household savings to renovate an old wing or build a new wing on the house. Eventually the older generation may provide a new house to enable their son or sons to establish new households nearby. The exact procedure followed probably varies according to the wealth of the individual household, the numbers of its members and the pressures on land for housing in the local village or community.

Jiang village

A survey of the household rearrangement and divisions on and after marriage in Jiang village reveals the reliance of the younger generation on the older for the provision of housing. In one household the elder

son had been provided with a room for the couple's exclusive use at the time of his marriage, and the second son, who was about to be married, was also to be allotted a room. Before both sons were married, the household had anticipated such expansion and had therefore built and added additional rooms to the original suite of rooms (See Figure 10).

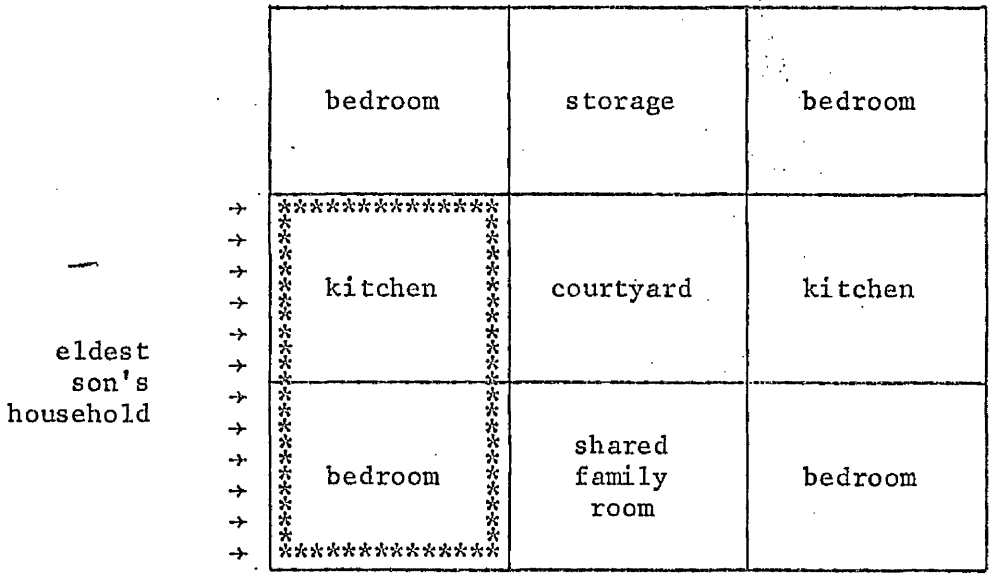
Figure 10: Residential Patterns before Division (2 married sons)



In another family where there was more than one married son and several other sons and daughters, the household had similarly built additional rooms and the eldest son had been allotted a room at the time of his marriage. After the birth of his third child in 1976, there had been a household division. Now he had his own separate household comprising a sleeping room and a kitchen, and he continued to share the large central family room. In addition to the division of the household residence, there had also been a division of household effects and family savings. For instance, the household had previously owned three bicycles

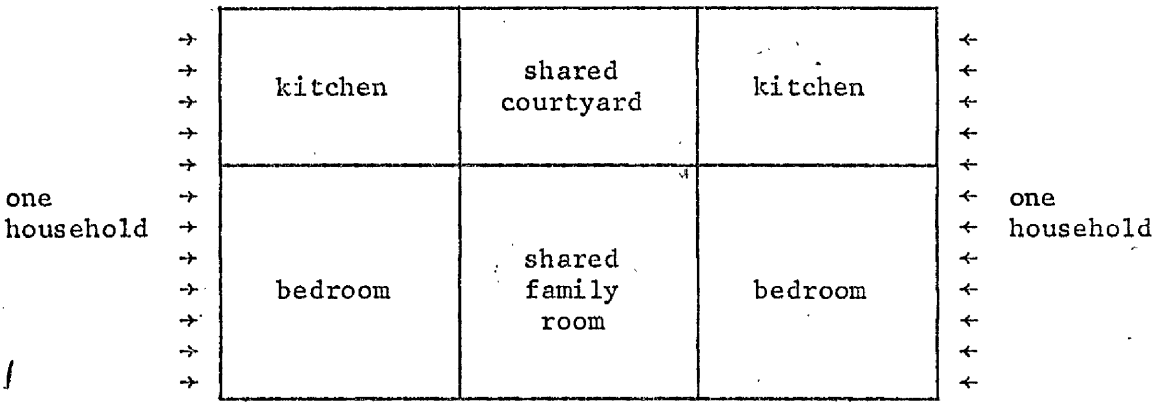
and one had been given to the eldest son. After the family savings had been divided, he had used some of his portion to purchase a second cycle for his wife (see Figure 10b).

Figure 10b: Residential Pattern After Household Division (1 married son)



In a third family, two married sons were originally provided with rooms within the existing household, but instead of adding additional rooms, the household had built a new house at the time of the eldest son's marriage in anticipation of further expansion and eventual household division. This had taken place in 1975 when the original house was divided between the parents and their two unmarried sons, and the second married son and his family (see Figure 10c).

Figure 10c: Division of Single Suite of Housing



The eldest son had moved into the new house (see Households 16, 17 and 18 on plan of Jiang village - Figure 14, Appendix 3).

In all these cases the younger generation was reliant on the older generation for the provision of housing. This situation contrasts strongly with that in urban areas where post-marital residence is largely neolocal. Although a young couple may move in temporarily with either of their parents when there is a housing shortage in some of the larger cities, it is a temporary expedient based on the understanding that as soon as housing is allocated to them they will establish their own separate household. Housing is not privately owned or part of the jia estate in urban areas, rather it is owned by the municipal authorities or occupational enterprises and allocated to young couples for their life-span.

The economy of the household

The economy of the household in the rural areas is largely organised along collective lines which provided the older generational with additional sanctions. McAleavy has noted that in the past the general rule was that the fruits of the labour of all family members, whether they worked at home on the family land or earned money from jobs outside the home, had to be put in the common fund from which the family supported itself and which on partition was divided among those so entitled (1955: 545). In rural areas today the household budget is reckoned collectively. The individual incomes in kind and in cash are pooled and added to the income from the private sector. In one household in Jiang village where there were seven persons made up of five wage earners and two dependants, the grandmother and a young grandson, they received an average of 72 jin of food grain per month per person in one year. The main source of cash income had been that distributed to them by the production team according

to the number of work points they had earned. This totalled 700 yuan including the earnings of the son who worked in the commune shop. In addition the household received 120 yuan by selling an average of two pigs each year. They grew all their own vegetables and much of the meat came from the allowances given in lieu of the two pigs and their 15 chickens and hens. In this household, like the others in the village, not only was the income inclusively tallied, but also their expenditures were reckoned collectively. The main items of expenditure were housing, clothing, consumer items such as bicycles, sewing machines, radios, fans and wristwatches and the expenses associated with marriage. Each household had one common savings account out of which these expenses were met.

The organisation of the household economy on these collective lines meant that although they contributed to the common fund, the young were ultimately dependent on the household to meet the expenses engendered by marriage. These were reckoned as one of the collective expenses of the household. The importance of this source of support for individuals of the younger generation is confirmed by the difficulties which xiaxiang boys in rural areas experience in negotiating a marriage. They are not only disadvantaged in individual terms in that they were normally inexperienced agricultural workers earning lower wages than the experienced peasant lad (White, G., 1974: 504), but peasant boys also had the good fortune to share in the resources of their households. Xiaxiang boys did not have behind them the same opportunities to distribute labour between the various sectors of the economy or to accumulate capital in order to meet the customary marriage expenses and provide housing.

In contrast, in urban areas the income and the expenses of the household are reckoned on an individual basis. The monthly expenditures of the household are calculated and divided among each wage-earning member.

For example in several households where members were interviewed by the author in the city of Guangzhou, the living expenses were reckoned on a per capita basis per month with all members contributing periodically to the purchase of some consumer item. The remainder of each individual's income is at his or her disposal and for young people one of the main expenses to be saved for is their own marriage. The young couples I interviewed in urban areas had all met their own marriage expenses out of their individual savings and the unmarried daughters who had no definite plans for marriage were greatly teased about the fact that they were already saving up for their own marriages. The furnishings of the rooms of newly married couples reflected on their own individual thrift rather than the relative contributions of the households of the bride and groom as in rural areas.

Thus, in comparison to the urban familial form, in rural areas the structure and functions of the household with its reciprocal obligations and combined resources encouraged the older generation to maintain control of the marriage negotiations of the younger generation. What emerges in the rural and urban social fields is a direct correlation between the household composition, the economic interdependence of its members and the degree of parental participation in the procedures of mate selection. In urban areas where post-marital residence is more likely to be neolocal, where the household co-exists alongside community institutions, and where the functionality of the household is minimised and it is less a unit of production and consumption, there is a lesser degree of parental control. In rural areas where post-marital residence is more likely to be virilocal, or at least so in the first instance, where the household is more of a unit of production and consumption demanding the recruitment and reproduction of labour, and where community institutions are less developed, then

the interests in the negotiation of marriage and the sanctions at the disposal of the older generation are greater. Far from decelerating the degree of familial control over marriage, it may be that the very structure and functions of the patrilocal domestic group work against the implementation of the new ideological model in the rural social field.

CHAPTER 10

MARRIAGE AND PRIMARY GROUPS

The traditional balance of power between the older and the younger generations within the domestic group could only be maintained as long as it was supported by both the formal and informal relations within the two-dimensional social field. The very existence of the new law introducing the new ideological model, the new political associations active in its support and government intervention in its favour presented an alternative to the established power relations of the informal social field and in turn brought it into competition with the formal social field. Formerly the government had supported the authority of the elders and as a colloquial saying quoted in Chapter 3 had made clear, 'Even an upright magistrate does not intervene in domestic affairs' (Smith, 1902: 292). Now family affairs and procedures for mate selection, traditionally the concern of the elders, were incorporated into the new law which was designed to provide 'a powerful weapon for the younger generation in their struggle against the old marriage and family systems' (KMRB, 27 February 1957; PR, 13 March 1964). Once an individual defying the elders' authority could look to resources outside the family institutions for support then the power of the elders was at risk, and to provide the requisite resources political authorities and associations were exhorted to concern themselves with marriage and the internal affairs of the domestic group. As one article stressed, 'the attitude of perceiving the masses' problems of marriage and family as small matters in life, as personal problems of individual commune members is incorrect ... marriage and domestic affairs are indeed large problems in the practical lives of the masses and cadres should be concerned with them' (ZF, 1 January 1966). It was impressed

upon these cadres by the government that only their support, guidance and intervention could demonstrate that their concern and responsibility is more encompassing than that of relatives and friends or those who were traditionally concerned with domestic affairs' (Min. of Interior, 1963: 11). The introduction of the new ideological model brought the government and political institutions into direct conflict with primary groups. In nearly every case of conflict, parents in rural and urban areas mobilised kin and neighbours in support of their traditional controls of mate selection, while the younger generation turned to government cadres, the Party, the Youth League or Women's Federation for support. The form which the immediate conscious model took was likely to reflect the dominance of either one of the resources at any one time or at any one place within the social field.

In both rural and urban areas the introduction of the new ideological model brought the influence of the primary groups into competition with that of the political associations. Primary groups have been defined anthropologically as those characterised by face-to-face, permanent, affective, non-instrumental and diffused inter-personal relations (Litwak and Szelenyi, 1969: 465). The three types of primary group structures normally identified include kinship ties beyond the immediate household, neighbours and friends. Kinship structures may be distinguished by semi-permanent biological or legal ties between households, and neighbours are characterised by the geographical proximity of members and consequent face-to-face contacts. In contrast friendship rests on affectivity alone and structurally constitutes the weakest of bonds, having neither the permanence of the kinship link or the face-to-face contact characterising the neighbourhood. There has been little attention given to the structure and function of primary groups in contemporary China

primarily because previous analyses have operated on the common assumption that the very form which the political and economic development of the People's Republic takes rests on the decline and eventual disappearance of such groups.*

It has usually been presumed that the development of a new form of political authority in China required social conditions which were antithetical to the maintenance of the primary group, and that political organisations and associations were more effective than primary groups in achieving the goals of social development. In an article on new types of interpersonal relations, Ezra Vogel suggests that comradeship or ties based on common political affiliation have replaced those based on kinship, the neighbourhood and friendship (1965: 46). After the establishment of communes, Lethbridge has argued that the extension of Party control right down to village level has meant that compared to the government and the Party, family and kin can offer only the most fragile support for the individual (1962: 381-3). Some scholars have drawn out the implications of these assumptions for the control of the negotiations of marriage. Lethbridge concluded that the greater Party control made possible by the commune structure has allowed for the finer scrutiny of the marriage contract and helped to guarantee the free choice of marriage partners (1962: 383). C.K. Yang also suggests that the establishment of Party controls has weakened kinship and family ties and released the young from their controls, thereby encouraging the development of free-choice marriage (1959: 36). A study of marriage patterns in contemporary China,

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*Exceptionally Norma Diamond has recently drawn attention to the fact that the household in many rural production teams and brigades remains embedded in a network of male kinsmen (1975: 27).

however, suggests that in the rural social field the influence of kin and neighbours are still forces to be reckoned with and that they have continued to compete with political associations and authorities for control of marriage patterns.

The influence of kin and neighbours

At every stage of the negotiations of marriage the older generation is likely to have the support of their kin and neighbours and in the case studies it is their influence which the younger generation found particularly difficult to counter. Young people who were attracted to each other found it difficult to disregard the local gossip, xianhua, of kin and neighbours and meet openly. In interviews conducted by a Swedish observer in Liuling village, Shaanxi province, in the mid-1950s, it was evident that, though not all the inhabitants maintained traditional attitudes and felt uneasy at the thought of women laughing and joking with men, most continued to think it indecent and immoral and shocking that young people should talk with each other (Myrdal, 1967: 291). In the 1960s there were cases where kin and neighbours were of the opinion that nothing good could come of the free association of the sexes and they actively intervened in defence of their family reputations (ZQ, 27 October 1964; 16 April 1966). A contemporary report said of the influence of kin and neighbours that 'they criticise (the younger generation) in order to cause shame, and brand them as 'improper' or conspire so that they lose their reputation (Lu Yang, 1964: 17-18). In 1971 in a village in Henan it was still the case that a girl who was seen talking to boys and making friends would soon be considered 'too easy' or 'loose' in her relations with the opposite sex (Chen, 1973: 77). In this atmosphere of rumour and

gossip, individuals of the younger generation if they did meet and attract one another, were often afraid to express their affections openly to each other and in public. They feared the censure of local public opinion. In order to adhere to the new ideological model and delay their marriage, young people had to withstand constant pressure from kin and neighbours. Several correspondents to the media wrote that from their own experience and observations, it was all right to accept the new ideological model in theory, but when it came to putting it into practice it was very difficult to withstand the pressure of others, particularly parents, kin and friends. In one letter the correspondents said that they had discussed the question of raising the age of marriage at length and concluded that 'though the policy of late marriage theoretically rested on sound foundations, in actual practice, it could not find ready acceptance for a number of persons around them will often chide them, put pressure on them, or jeer at them and express pity as if they had done something wrong (GRB, 18 September 1962). Another correspondent warned against treating the problem of social pressure lightly because the public opinion it has formed often exerts a fairly strong pressure in favour of 'early' marriage (GRB, 27 September 1962).

The ritual and ceremonial forms associated with marriage were all identified with the maintenance of status in the community. The betrothal symbolised the ability of the older generation to maintain their authority and controls within the domestic group and thus maintain their status among kin and neighbours. Free-choice marriage was seen to cause loss of face or tarnish local reputations. The main criterion for the acceptance or the rejection of a betrothal gift was whether the household would maintain its standing in the village. 'If I decline to accept it will it not be a reflection on my family's social standing and way of doing things

in style?' (my emphasis) ZQ, 19 November 1964). The arguments posed in favour of the bridal sedan chair were couched in terms of the loss of status vis à vis kin and neighbours should the bride not be seen to be arriving in 'the proper manner or in style'. Likewise the provision of the dowry provided another opportunity to gain or at least not lose social status. In cases where the practice persisted, the overwhelming argument cited in its defence was its contribution to the status and social standing of the bride's family. 'If we don't spend some money and provide you with some form of dowry, will not other people laugh at us?' (my emphasis) (ZQ, 16 January 1966). But perhaps the most important social obligation by which reputations could be lost or gained lay in the provision of the marriage feast. It was required to be of a certain standard in order to prevent loss of status and it was an opportunity to lay obligations and return obligations. In rural areas households have proved reluctant to break the circle of obligations and invoke the gossip of their relatives and neighbours.

Articles in the media have reflected the concern of the government with the general problem of countering the influence of primary groups in reforming marriage patterns. One article on the ceremonials of marriage summed up its discussion of marital forms with the observation that

> 'Although some people realise the importance of changing prevailing bad customs, and practices, talk eloquently about the evil and harm of old feudal customs, or may have taken a firm stand at the beginning, they are often unable to withstand the trial at the crucial moment. They begin to waver and compromise by force of habit under the pressure of their parents who may have given them a good scolding, or under the influence of their relatives and friends who may have used persuasion to talk them into conforming with tradition and the trends of the times so that they may not be outcasts from their own circles.'
>
> (NFRB, 25 January 1965)

In another article some members of the older generation in Zhejiang province were interviewed in Renmin Ribao for their observations on the new marriage system. They were of the opinion that although it might be a good arrangement all round, the traditions of marriage had passed from generation to generation and were too deeply entrenched to be undone overnight. They said that they themselves did not mind, but the problem was how to face their relatives and friends.

> 'What if it sets the tongues of others wagging and makes your friends and relatives mad at you. You can't get away from being called things like "cheap skate", "petty devil", "cool blood animal"... People also may say things like "You took gifts from others before. But now you give nothing in return. You just take and not give." How then can you hold your head up?'
>
> (28 June 1964)

So they concluded, 'We'd better stick to the old standard', for, as they said, they just could not take the pressures from relatives, neighbours and friends (28 June 1964).

It was comments like these that caused an editorial in Renmin Ribao to suggest that although people may have seen through the hackneyed and stultifying customs, the real obstacle to social change was the heavy pressure of public opinion brought to bear on each person. 'Like a massively closely-woven net', it concluded

> '... old habits, and influences and social opinion limit and dictate people's thinking and action. Everyone seems to be acting not out of his own will or needs, but out of desperation for acceptance among relatives, neighbours and all. The same relatives and neighbours, meanwhile, dare not do anything not hitherto accepted by others, if just to avoid gossip. Thus everyone fears everyone else ... this is so-called pressure of public or social opinion.'
>
> (28 June 1964)

The influence of political associations

Set against the pressure of public or social opinion from kin and neighbours was the influence of the political authorities or associations in support of the new ideological model. Yet there is evidence to suggest that the competition between the sanctions and support of primary groups and political associations has been somewhat uneven. Not only has the support system provided by primary groups continued, but the support which the political authorities have been exhorted to give to the new ideological model has not always been forthcoming. This was particularly so in the early 1950s when the new law came into operation before the new ideological model had a basis of power or authority sufficient to compete with that supporting the old ideological model. In the event of conflict, the mere citation of the terms of the new law was not enough and the formal basis of active support was often unreliable. In these early years there were numbers of suicides and murders among those who attempted to adopt elements of the new ideological model, and especially among women who traditionally rarely had a power base within the domestic group to compare with that of the elders.* The conventional interpretation of the events of this initial period of implementation of the new Marriage Law

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* For example, a report from the Central South Democratic Women's Federation estimated that in the year ending 30 August 1951 there had been a total of 10,000 deaths as the result of the introduction of the Marriage Law. They cited some local statistics in evidence (ZJ, 30 August 1951)

Area	Date	Lost lives
Changsha Special District	May-August 1950	98 women (68 suicide)
Huanghua xian, Hubei	July-August 1950	14
Shangshui xian, Hunan	3 months 1950	90
Ningyuan xian, Hunan	2 months 1950	17 (all suicide)

has been that the cadres held the population in their grip and that their political authority enabled them to apply the provisions of the law without regard for the opinions and wishes of the local population. It was this forced implementation of the law which primarily caused the problems reported in the media (CNA, 25 September 1953). But reports from the local investigations into the conditions of implementation undertaken at the time suggest otherwise. They reveal that it was much more likely that those who attempted to adopt the new ideological model did not obtain the requisite support from cadres and political associations which they needed in order to implement the new ideological model.

In 1951 reports on the problems encountered in the campaign to reform marriage patterns began to place particular blame on the failure of those in positions of political authority (local cadres and village leaders or members of political associations such as the Youth League, Women's Federation and Peasants' Associations) to support those struggling against feudal marriage customs. Towards the end of 1951, Renmin Ribao openly admitted for the first time that the increase in the murders or deaths of women was not due to conservative thought or feudal customs, but was due in considerable part to the failure or disinclination of Party cadres and leaders to enforce the law and give support to individuals who wished to adopt elements of the new ideological model (RMRB, 29 September 1951; 13 October 1951). On several occasions the national newspapers and periodicals described how those who resisted old customs lost heart or sometimes their lives from lack of public sympathy and political support. A column was set aside in Renmin Ribao to report on the implementation of the Marriage Law and draw attention to the irregularities committed by local authorities. One case reported in Women of New China concerned the marriage of a young girl who had been promised in

marriage by her parents who had also exacted a gift of a measure of rice. The girl wished to marry a neighbouring lad of her own acquaintance and she therefore applied to the People's Court for permission to terminate the betrothal negotiated by her parents. The court upheld the betrothal, as did a higher court at xian level. Three months before the arranged marriage was due to take place, the girl again approached the court for a second decision. In the face of further procrastination by the courts and increasingly desperate about her approaching fate, she threw herself into the well in the court compound and died (WC, October 1951). There were numbers of cases published in the media all supporting the accusation that cadres interfered in the freedom of marriage either by forcibly separating couples who wished to negotiate a free choice marriage or by forcibly arranging marriages between young people themselves (ZJ, 30 August 1951).

Many reports in the early 1950s began to identify the negligence of local cadres as the 'greatest stumbling block' to the implementation of the new Marriage Law (RMRB, 29 September 1951; WC, October 1951). They were accused of adhering to the old ideological model by conniving with local village elders to support the old marriage system. They either openly tolerated the old customs or adopted an attitude of indifference to complaints from those wishing to adopt the new ideological model, or they even punished those who wished to defy parental interference in marriage negotiations. In some cases the latter were expelled from the Youth League or other political associations (NCNA, 29 October 1951). According to these same reports the cadres were motivated in their recalcitrance by one of several factors. Some feared that the disappearance of traditional customs would create a vacuum in morals or 'all confusion under Heaven' and certain social disorder in which sexual

relations would become as easy as sipping the proverbial glass of water. They feared that their own authority as head of the domestic group would be threatened or they thought that marriage had never been, and never should be, a matter of state policy and interference. It was also thought to be a distraction from the real affairs and priorities of the State such as land reform. Others thought that it was but a temporary fad of the new government and that it would pass just as 'a large clap of thunder is followed by small drops of rain'. Custom would surely win out in the end and it was no use fighting it. Some shelved it in the belief that their communities were not yet ready for that kind of reform (RMRB, 20 March 1953). Indeed numbers of government circulars and directives were published which were full of reproofs for the large numbers of judiciary organs, cadres and Party members who had failed to give their full support to those abiding by the new provisions of the law (RMRB, 19 March 1953). Through the media, the government attempted to directly inform young people that they had its support and should not under any circumstances take the law into their own hands or resort to suicide (NCNA, 31 January 1953; 25 February 1953).

Complaints that young people failed to find support from the political authorities and associations declined notably after the early 1950s, although a few cases still appear in the media. In 1962, for example, an adopted daughter-in-law appealed via the media for help when the personnel of the government department concerned had refused to uphold the Marriage Law (NFRB, 5 July 1962). Over the years there have been a number of articles addressed to the members of the Party, the Youth League and the Women's Federation calling on them to pay more attention to the Marriage Law and support young people who resisted arranged marriages. There is evidence to suggest that their continued reluctance was less the

result of disagreement with or disinclination to support the principles of the new Marriage Law, than the fear that any action on their part would be interpreted as interference or obstruction in the private or personal sphere of marriage relations (ZQ, 1 April 1955; TKP, 12 September 1964).

This inhibition displayed by the political associations suggests that there is still a tendency to divide the private or domestic from the public or political sphere of activities, and place the former in the control of the primary as opposed to political groups. This separation may be encouraged by the differing degrees of importance attached to the institution of marriage by its own definitions. Although marriage is defined as important for both the individual and society, it is placed in a position secondary to 'revolutionary activities' or 'socialist construction' thus implying that it lies outside these boundaries. In the debates entitled 'What is the Correct View of Marriage?', 'Is marriage a matter of minor or major importance?' or 'Is Marriage Really an important matter or small matter?', marriage is accorded an importance as a new stage in the life-cycle of the individual, but relegated to a secondary position in establishing social priorities: 'Compared with revolutionary work, marriage and love is really a small matter' (ZQ, 14 September 1962); 'An individual must try and place love in a secondary position to the revolution in one's life' (ZQ, 1 April 1955); 'Compared with the undertaking we have been called upon to do, marriage after all takes second place' (ZQ, 2 February 1963). In case such sayings should lead to the neglect or abuse of marriage, it is also identified as a question deserving of serious concern by the individual. As one article has stressed, 'The placing of love and marriage in a second place to the revolution does not mean that as long as a person is associated with

socialist construction, he should not give any consideration to the question of love and marriage. Or that even when he has reached marriageable age, he should dedicate himself to the revolution rather than give any thought to love and marriage. No we do not mean that' (GRB, 22 November 1962). Although a booklet of advice published in 1964 elaborated on this theme by suggesting that whereas 'marriage problems, when compared to the revolutionary cause are minor matters and should be put in second place, speaking in terms of an individual, love and marriage and the organisation of a new family are after all, serious matters' (Lu Yang, 1964: 11-12). Despite the importance accorded to marriage as a stage in the life cycle of an individual, in the last resort it was always associated with the secondary, individual, private and domestic as opposed to the prior social, public and political domain (ZQ, 30 August 1956; RMRB, 15 November 1956).

Primary groups in rural China

If the continuing influence of the primary groups and the inhibitions expressed by the political associations have contributed to the nation-wide and uneven competition between the generations and the primary and political groups, the variety in immediate conscious models demonstrates that the competition has been even more weighted in the favour of primary groups in rural areas. Within the village the primary groups provided greater competition for the influence of political associations. It is noticeable that the basic-level cadres or representatives of political authority in rural villages have often been blamed by the Chinese government for the failure of certain policies (Baum and Teiwes, 1968: 13). But it may be that if the study of marriage is any indication it is not so much the weakness of basic-level cadres, as the strength of the over-

lapping primary groups which should be held responsible for the slow implementation of government policies. In the sphere of marriage negotiations, the older generation, with the support of kin and neighbours, has maintained much of its traditional controls and the form which the immediate conscious models takes can be directly linked to the differences in the immediate social environment of individuals and households, and in particular to the structures and functions of the primary groups. That is, where primary groups overlap and encapsulate the individual and the household, they may be more likely to provide a single reference group and unidirectional social pressures which support the controls and the authority of the older generation. It can be argued that in rural areas in China, primary groups, far from being weakened, have not only continued to overlap to form a single concrete and close-knit group, but that the inter-relationships within these groups have been formalised and institutionalised by the new demographic and economic policies. It is this structural feature of rural society which has suggested the second hypothesis explaining the variety of immediate conscious models in the People's Republic of China: that the degree to which the old ideological model predominates over the new, and therefore the extent to which parental participation characterises marriage patterns, varies with the degree to which primary groups overlap.

An important general feature of social structure is the way in which primary groups are connected with the territorial arrangement of persons. In China there has been no large-scale rearrangement of the territorial distribution of rural persons, and rural areas continued to be characterised by discretely-bounded villages which vary in size from a few tens to a few hundred households. These villages now have a new definition and function and since the establishment of the communes from 1957 they tend

to coincide with the organisational level of either the production team or production brigade. Production teams may consist of any number between 30 and 150 households and most scholars have concluded that their boundaries may coincide with the territorial village. Alternatively, and depending on its original size, it may either combine with neighbouring villages to form a production team or itself be divided into production teams. However it has been organisationally redefined, the spatial continuity of the village remains. This contrasts strongly with the redistribution of the rural population and the establishment of New and ujamaa villages in Tanzania (Blue and Weaver, 1977). Apart from the exchange of women in marriage, there is now little permanent movement between production brigades, teams or villages, and this very important demographic factor encourages a high level of involvement in primary groups.

I myself observed that in contrasting the social conditions of the past with the present, several leaders of Huadong commune and members of individual households in Jiang village made unsolicited references to the necessary dispersal of members of kin groups in the previous generations because of natural calamities and emigration to the cities and Southeast Asia. One of the commune leaders quoted an old local folksong:

> The peasantry here on the land is very poor,
> Every village links each other into a river,
> The natural calamities has not its end,
> And people are obliged to leave their native land forever.

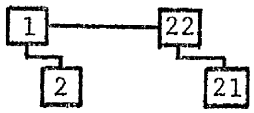
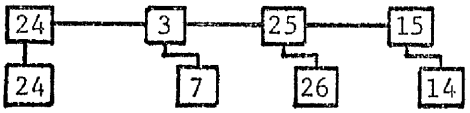
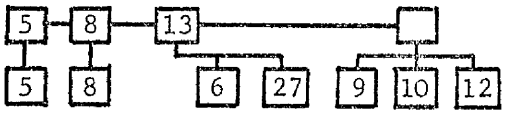
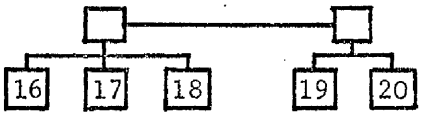
This dispersal of kin groups was contrasted with present social conditions in which men need not leave their birthplace. This means that it is in the context of a territorially bounded group of the production team or village that primary groups are most likely to overlap and have their most continuous influence on individuals and households. Within the discretely bounded village, neighbours may be kin and friends at one and the same time.

The proportion of kinship ties to other relations in the village may vary from those characteristic of the southern provinces such as Guangdong and Fujian where single-surnamed village members comprise a single lineage, to the multi-surnamed villages of the northern provinces. In the past the southern provinces were dominated by lineages or large localised kin groups whose boundaries often coincided with those of the village. Freedman (1966) examined their historical forms in some detail, and evidence from other scholars suggests that lineage-based settlements continue to characterise southern provinces (Chen, 1973; Diamond, 1975).

Jiang Village

In the three villages which make up a production team in Guangdong, my own survey of the households revealed that they were all surnamed Jiang and that they probably composed a fragment of a higher order lineage. Within the village each household was asked to identify its nearest kin. Without exception close kin, jinqin, were identified as brothers who had established separate households, father's brothers and father's brother's sons, and a line was drawn between them and father's father's brothers and their sons who were either designated 'distant kin' or not cited at all. Only one household had no close kin in the village and they were recent settlers driven by crowded housing conditions from the nearest neighbouring village where they had numerous kin all again with the same surname Jiang. Jiang village itself is characterised by geographically concentrated clusters of agnatic kin who are either groups of ego's brothers or father's brothers and they are identified in Figures 11 and 12.

Figure 11: Kinship Organisation in Jiang Village

KIN CLUSTER	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	GENERATIONAL DEPTH
a	4 (H1, H2, H21, H22) 	2 (brother's and father's brothers)
b	7 (H7, H3, H26, H25, H14, H24, H15) 	2 (brother's and father's brothers
c	8 (H8, H9, H10, H12, H13, H27, H6, H5) 	2 (father's brothers and father's brother's sons)
d	5 (H16, H17, H18, H19, H20) 	2 (brothers, father's brother's sons)
e	3 (H4, H3, H11)	3 (father's father's brothers)

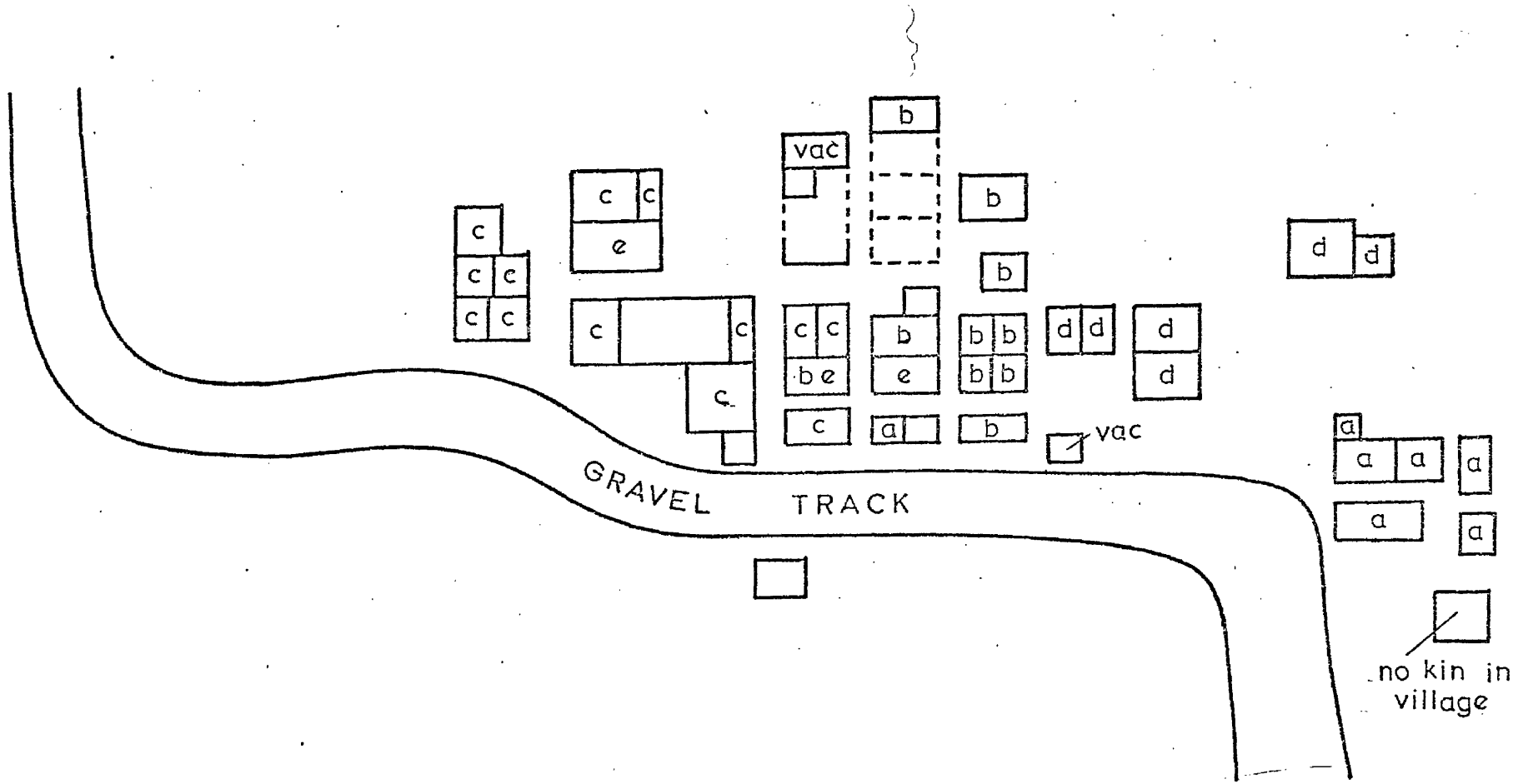
H = Household; for explanation of Code No. see Figure 17, p.378

for household plan of village see Figure 15, p.361.

In the northern provinces the proportion of agnatic kin ties within the village had traditionally been less than in the south. But it may be that demographic factors, especially the decline in permanent physical

a,b,c,d,e households belonging to different kin groups

vac = vacant



mobility or migration out, and the continuation of virilocal marriage will increase the number of agnatic kinship ties in relation to others within the village. Instead of provinces like Guangdong and Fujian constituting exceptional cases of lineage-based settlements, it may not be too far fetched to suggest that over time the proportion of kinship ties within villages in the rest of rural China may increase and might come to approximate the forms characteristic of the southern provinces. At present, though, it can certainly be assumed that the same demographic factors contribute to relations of proximity having all the intensity and closeness of kinship ties, and to this extent it may well be that kinship ties continue to directly influence the patterning of other social relations based on common residence and affectivity within the village. Structural features which provide for the overlapping of primary groups have been reinforced by the extent to which co-operation between the households is required to provide and maintain the welfare of the rural household and encourages a high degree of intimacy or frequency of contact between kin and neighbours.

A wide variety of functions formerly performed by the household are now undertaken by the village as part of, or the whole of, a unit of production, distribution and accounting. Social scientists have generally tended to isolate the household and even conceptualise it as a mode of production by minimising the links between households or to see links or exchanges between households as analytically unimportant to the underlying structure of the present form (Chayanov, 1966; Sahlins 1974). In the past, fieldwork in villages of rural China, and Ramon Myers' study of north China villages (1970) have amply demonstrated that co-operation between households was a widespread practice. Labour, instruments of production and loans of produce and cash were exchanged between households.

In rural China today this exchange of goods and services between households has been institutionalised and magnified by the process of collectivisation. By this process all kinds of exchanges have moved from an informal and ad hoc basis to one that is now institutionalised and prescribed on the basis of a common neighbourhood. The inhabitants of the villages are required to work together and co-operate on an unprecedented level of exchange of goods and services. The production teams and brigades are now units of production, the owners of the means of production and the dominant units for the recruitment and organisation of labour within its boundaries. Members of these units not only work in close proximity, but the ordering of the exchange and co-operation are reinforced by the new ideology which encourages the individual household to place a high value on the exchange of goods and services within the collective. They are actively exhorted to solve common problems and to mobilise common resources to improve the level of their services through co-operation. The structure and functions of primary groups in rural society has had the effect of maintaining, if not solidifying, the bonds between the individual inhabitant and primary group.

Measures of solidarity within primary groups

Several measures of the solidarity of primary groups in rural areas are the degree to which the household is prepared to defy the norms of the primary groups, the extent to which ritual and ceremonial forms symbolise their solidarity and the success of the government in imposing class divisions within the primary groups. In a social field where there is a greater cleavage between the new ideological model and the immediate conscious models, an individual or household may have the choice of either

conforming to the new ideological model of the society at the risk of losing status in the local community, or rejecting the new ideological model of the society and conforming to the immediate conscious model of the community in exchange for their acceptance and a certain amount of status. The case studies suggest that in the rural areas individuals of both generations found defiance of the norms of the local community the most difficult obstacle to overcome in the establishment of new marriage patterns. All but those who had access to the extended networks of the Youth League or Party beyond the confines of the face-to-face community preferred to defer to rather than take on the local community.

In rural areas the case studies have also suggested that the cohesion of the primary groups rests to a large degree of the maintenance of ceremonial and ritual forms, and village inhabitants were markedly reluctant to break the circle of reciprocal obligations and prestations within the ritual and ceremonial of marriage. Finally, there is some evidence that it has been much more difficult to establish horizontal or class links within primary groups and especially within those based on lineage or kin. Where villages have been dominated by a single lineage it seems as if the establishment of active poor and lower-middle peasant associations may have been more difficult. At the time of land reform, the most potent period of class struggle in rural areas, there was evidence that landlords exploited kin ties and certainly in one single-lineage village, the procedures of land reform had to be repeated during the Cultural Revolution because the kin ties had been such that little of the landlords' property had been redistributed the first time round (Chen, 1973: 137-8). Educational materials have certainly emphasised the need to draw attention to class differences within lineages (ZQ, 26 October 1963; RMRB, 23 November 1964).

It is the structure and function of the overlapping primary groups in rural areas which have enabled them to maintain a certain measure of solidarity and remain the primary or single most important reference group for the household in rural China. There seems to have been no important change in the types and unidirectional nature of social pressure from primary groups, and there are now fewer avenues of escape from the pressures of the type recorded in Republican China in Chapter 2. Moreover the new economic policies have contributed to the maintenance of the sanctions traditionally appropriated by the primary groups. Through the sanctions at their disposal, the older generation have maintained their control of the norms of the local community which has enabled them to modify the new ideological model in their own interests. One of the primary means by which the older generation, with the support of the primary groups, have worked to maintain their controls of the negotiations of marriage has been by maintaining the norms of segregation within the local community.

The primary group has been singularly successful at retaining the norms of segregation within the rural villages and this has been a requisite to the maintenance of the elders' controls of the negotiation of marriage. The form which the negotiation of marriage takes can be directly linked to the number of opportunities for social interaction among young people of marriageable age, and in rural areas today opportunities for meeting and mating are suitably circumscribed by the maintenance of the traditional norms of segregation. The evidence cited in Chapter 4 suggests that it was the lack of alternative opportunities and the amount of rumour and gossip surrounding pre-marital ritual forms which encouraged young people to collude in the maintenance of parental authority and controls. Moreover, the socio-economic relations between the households

of the local community reinforces the bonds of solidity within the household for strains and divisions within the household must be kept at a certain level so as not to interfere with the welfare of the community. It would seem that the norms favouring parental participation in marriage procedures had a greater structural significance where inter-personal relations were dominated by overlapping primary groups whose influence were effectively unidirectional. The extent to which ego remains wholly encapsulated within traditionally effective networks must vary enormously over the rural social field, but it is in contrast to the urban social fields that they can be so characterised.

Primary groups in urban China

Urban areas in comparison to rural areas are characterised less by singular territorially-bounded groups than by many different communities based on such criteria as common participation in an occupation, on class membership, common interests, or previous membership of other social systems as well as those based on common residence, kinship and friendship. This social field is characterised by the dispersal of primary groups and just as kin are less likely to be neighbours, so neighbours are less likely to be work mates and so on. Cities are organised into neighbourhoods which are subdivided into residential groups of approximately 150 to 500 households. They are both informally organised self-governing groups whose main activities include public health, political study, and the establishment of kindergartens, community workshops and one or two small-scale neighbourhood factories which, while they require a certain degree of co-operation between households, they are nowhere near constituting the unit of production, distribution and accounting typical of rural neighbourhoods.

It is also a feature of the organisation of urban neighbourhoods that they mainly attract the allegiance of the elderly and retired or otherwise unemployed members of the community rather than those whose work takes them outside the neighbourhood. Friends were more likely to be a mixture of peers from school days or work mates sharing in the same occupations or neighbours. With some notable exceptions, urban areas are not characterised by the geographical concentration of those related by kinship ties. Their loss of control of housing and its allocation either by municipal authorities and occupational enterprises and the pressures on urban housing, have meant that family members have very much been at the mercy of its availability, and although there is much less known about kin relations in urban areas in the People's Republic of China, it seems that there is a certain amount of dispersal.

Certainly in Guangzhou where I asked members of several households about the whereabouts of kin, they were either living outside the neighbourhood or factory housing complex but elsewhere in the same city, or they were resident in the respondent's village of origin. The kin resident within the same city visited each other on rest days and, although the persons interviewed might have left their native villages up to fifty years ago, they maintained regular contact on special occasions and festivals with their kin there. The one notable exception in Guangzhou proved to be the former boat people who were rehoused in a large estate along the bank of the Pearl River in 1965. In their case nearly all agnatic and affinal kin resided within the estate itself. There were a number of blocks of flats which housed 40,000 people and 7,900 households. The six households which I visited were all in the Bingjian neighbourhood, which comprised 58 two- to three-storeyed blocks composed of 11,000 persons or 2,700 households. In these households the wives had all come from

within the estate and almost all the affinal and agnatic kin either lived within the same household or a different household in the same or nearby block (see Appendix 3). In the urban areas generally, however, the separation of different communities has meant that there is a much greater choice over the extent to which ego interacts with kin and neighbours.

The dispersal of primary groups suggests that there may be a wider range of reference groups, and individuals and households may have had a considerable range of options in selecting the group or category that they identified with. Indeed, the case studies confirm this supposition. They illustrate that young people from the urban areas are as likely to take the advice or follow the example of friends, peers, fellow members of class or political associations or even abstract categories or role models as kin or neighbours. In urban areas it was much more likely that the individual or household would come into contact with a variety of conscious models and meet with a range of choice in making its selection. The correspondences on the age of marriage, for example, illustrate that the options considered by a young person very much depended on the reference group with whom they primarily identified and it was as likely to be fellow factory workers as kin and neighbours. In this social field the new ideological model upheld by associations and organisations met with less competition from the influence of primary groups. Young people found it less difficult to defy the dispersed authority of kin and neighbours, and the older generation and primary groups did not have the immediacy and monopoly of sanctions at the disposal of their rural counterparts.

In comparison to the urban social field, then, the structure and function of the rural household has encouraged the older generation to defy the new ideological model and maintain their control of marriage

procedures and it is the structure and functions of the primary group in rural areas which have enabled them to formulate new immediate conscious models and maintain these controls. In the rural areas it can be argued that the new economic policies contribute to the maintenance of the forms which the household and primary groups have traditionally taken, both of which have worked against the implementation of the new ideological model. The isolation of these structures as factors encouraging the persistence of the old ideological model, and not forces encouraging social change in the marriage patterns, does not yet allow us to identify the degree to which social change in the marriage patterns can be attributed to the presence of the new ideological model itself. However, the identification of the economic factors inhibiting its nation-wide implementation is already sufficient to challenge the expectations aroused by the studies of the Republican period (1911-1949) and the suppositions put forward by scholars of Taiwan, both of which have assumed that the 'modernisation' of family and kinship structures in the People's Republic of China parallels those of Republican China and Taiwan. In each case, scholars have argued that it is the new socio-economic factors or the process of industrialisation or 'modernisation' which primarily encourages changes in marriage patterns and family types. A more detailed comparison of marriage patterns, the household and primary groups, and the various processes articulating these elements of structure in contemporary Taiwan and China, raises in a direct form the problems of equating structural relationships in an instant of time and agents or processes of social change. A comparison in the following chapter between changes in rural Taiwan and China suggests that what we may have in fact is a reversal of the forces making for and the factors inhibiting social change.

CHAPTER 11

A COMPARATIVE STUDY: TAIWAN

The theory linking industrialisation with the increasing isolation of the nuclear or conjugal family dominated the attempts by sociologists of the family to identify the correlations between family type and economic development in the middle decades of this century. Because the movement from a non-industrial to an industrialised state occurred relatively late in China, it was a popular field of study in the 1930s and 1940s, and its implications for the structure of the family are rather better documented than most. The process they observed and their analysis of social structures convinced anthropologists such as Lang (1946), Levy (1949), and C.K. Yang (1959) that it was the new socio-economic factors or the process of urbanisation and industrialisation which primarily brought with it the establishment of the nuclear family as the normal form. Levy has argued that the changes introduced in the economic substructure of the family has been a primary factor in the new revolutionary orientation (1949: 318), and C.K. Yang, while giving more weight to the new ideological factors than Levy, also concludes that the social changes visible in marriage in the Republic of China were not self-conscious or the result of a specifically defined conceptual form of the family. Rather he says 'socio-economic environmental pressure became the major factor in altering the basic economic position of the family and in forcing a change in the family economic structure' (1959: 136). On the basis of their researches they both forecast an acceleration of this process of social change under the new Communist government.

In 1948 Levy anticipated that the greater development of industry and urbanisation programmes would undoubtedly lead to new forms of marriage

and the establishment of neolocal post-marital residence patterns. He argued that the patterns of the Republican period which combined elements of the traditional patterns and elements of the patterns associated with urban industrial society could only be temporary social phenomena. He thought industrialisation had already modified the traditional patterns sufficiently to suppose further change in a similar direction. 'The odds are,' he suggested, 'that this new pattern will be simply the conjugal family unit of the West rather than a patchwork of parts from the one and the other' (1949: 364-5). C.K. Yang anticipated that the spontaneous processes of the economic and social changes already well established in the Republican period would continue, but be amplified by the co-ordinated and conscious planning of an organised political power (1959: 19-20). The predictions and findings of these scholars were corroborated by field workers who took their data from the comparable and now more accessible social field of Taiwan.

In an attempt to ascertain the role of the new ideological model itself in the process of social change in the People's Republic of China, it seemed a good idea to take advantage of the existence of a close and comparative social field. As a province of China, Taiwan has shared much the same cultural background and the same traditional ideological model of arranged marriage. Recent changes in marriage patterns, family types and kin groups have been fully documented by a number of scholars making the most of the opportunities for field work, and most significantly, there is one important difference between the two fields. No new ideological model similar to that introduced into China since 1950 has been introduced into Taiwan. It may be that its absence will have caused considerable differences in the marriage patterns, family types and kinship structures which characterise Taiwan and the People's Republic today.

The majority of the population of Taiwan is made up of descendants of those who migrated from the Southeastern provinces of China in the 17th and 18th centuries. Later, after 1949, a new influx of 'mainlanders' arrived in Taiwan. Although the Japanese occupation and administration in Taiwan lasted for close on fifty years, the Japanese policy of maintaining and utilising the existing social and economic system has caused many scholars to claim that their presence had a limited direct effect on much of the traditional social life of the Chinese population, and that this was especially so in rural areas. Margery Wolf has pointed out that, although the Japanese had a remarkable effect on the stability, economy, health and communications of Taiwan, it should be noted that they made intensive studies of Taiwanese customary law in order to properly enforce it rather than destroy it (1972: 5). M. Cohen (1976), Gallin (1966: 2) and Barclay (1954) have also argued that the occupation government tried deliberately to inhibit fundamental changes in the Chinese social and economic order in Taiwan. In 1950, then, the province of Taiwan still shared the same traditional ideological model as in mainland China, but despite the absence of a new ideological model, the range of marriage patterns existing in Taiwan today shows remarkable similarities to the variety of conscious models of the People's Republic of China.

Arranged marriage

Arranged marriage which, in accordance with the traditional ideological model, is contracted between the heads of households who control the selection of spouses and conduct the negotiations through a go-between with the young partners rarely having any sight or contact with each other prior to marriage, is on the decline in Taiwan. Arranged marriage is said

to be a rarity in the largest city, Taibei (Schak, 1973: 203), although there are still references to instances of arranged marriage in reports from the capital (Tang, 1973: 132-4). In rural areas it is said to be more common, though still again very much on the decline (Schak, 1973: 203). One field worker estimated that only 5-10 per cent of marriages in rural areas were still arranged (Arcay, 1968: 7), and in one field survey conducted in 1961 among 351 rural families in north, central and southern parts of Taiwan, only a very few respondents were reported to be in favour of allowing marriage negotiations to remain the exclusive responsibility of the parents (Yang, M., 1962: 70). One variation of arranged marriage, that of child betrothal or adopted in daughter-in-law, tang yangxi, was reported to be quite common in Taiwan a few decades ago. One survey estimated that in 1925 over half the marriages negotiated in Taiwan were of this form (Wolf M. 1972: 171). It had certain advantages in a society where there was some difficulty in procuring brides, it avoided the high costs of the normal marriage ceremonies and, above all, as Arthur Wolf has argued, it ensured the ascendancy of the elders and a certain degree of harmony in the household by raising the wife in lieu of a daughter (Wolf, A., 1968). According to field workers this form has now all but disappeared (Gallin, 1966: 164-5; Wolf, 1972: 180). The increase in numbers of marriageable girls due to the decline in infant mortility and rise in public health standards, an increased cash surplus available for ceremonial expenditure and the increasingly open opposition of young people to this arrangement, have meant that it had ceased to be a safe, inexpensive and acceptable form of marriage. Instead the interpretation of what is a careful and acceptable method of marriage arrangement has been redefined to allow for the operation of negative sanctions by the young.

New procedures of negotiation

The traditional sequence of ceremonial events providing for the selection of spouses and the negotiation of marriage agreements has been modified to include the 'formal meeting' of potential spouses and allows for their consent to the match. This innovation was introduced into the ceremonial framework in the 1940s and is known as miai, a Japanese term for an arranged meeting between prospective marriage partners (Diamond, 1969: 52) or xiangqin, a Chinese term for meeting by mutual attraction (Schak, 1973: 231). Following the initial negotiations and the exchange of horoscopes, the go-between arranges a meeting for the young couple, together with their parents or some elder relative. The miai may occur in a public place such as a city amusement park, a movie house, or a restaurant, or the boy and his family may visit the girl's home where she may appear to serve tea and cigarettes. Whatever the venue, the miai is of short duration, two hours at the most, and although the young couple may exchange a few words or shyly glance at one another, the conversation mainly centres around the go-between and the adults present. It is after this brief meeting that the young couple are asked to express an opinion about the tentative choice and only after they have given their favourable opinion can the negotiations proceed. Through these modifications the young people have acquired a veto over the conclusion of the negotiations in that they could withhold their consent and at least have some say in whom they would not marry. This is the most common form of marriage negotiation in Taiwan and what is normally meant by 'modern marriages' in the rural areas (Diamond, 1969: 53; Bessac, 1965: 24-5). Although it is said to be less usual in the urban areas, anthropological studies would suggest that until this decade at least it was also a common

form in the cities. A survey of undergraduate students at two universities in Taibei in 1961 indicated that close on 40 per cent of the 651 respondents did not expect to choose their own mate (Marsh and O'Hara, 1961: 3-4), and more recently more than a third of the women interviewed in Taibei by Norma Diamond did not have contact with their spouse until the conclusion of the betrothal negotiations following the miai ceremony (Diamond, 1973: 220).

This form of marriage negotiation is popular with the older generation for it enables them to continue to control the selection of a spouse and yet be relieved of the final responsibility for the match. Few parents were prepared to allow the marriage negotiations to become the exclusive responsibility of the young, for the importance of marriage for 'family continuity' required that marriage still be within their control or at least a goodly share of their controls (Gallin, 1967: 5; Pasternak, 1972: 66). As one anthropologist has concluded, choosing a daughter-in-law is still a very serious business in Taiwan, and it can cost the groom's family half a year's income (Wolf, M., 1972: 108, 119). Each household negotiating the match gives due consideration to the other's economic and political potentialities and is anxious to improve its own prestige and security. Marriage alliances are seen in instrumental terms and valued for broadening the range of affinal ties to secure additional sources of capital, labour and political support (Pasternak, 1972: 61; Gallin, 1966: 176-7). The girl's family wants an economic and materially stable household for their daughter, and the boy's family hopes for a large dowry which generally included furniture, new clothing and jewelry, as well as certain household cleaning items to symbolise the tasks the bride will perform in her husband's household. Her parents-in-law have already appraised her adaptability to the ways of their household, her potential

contribution to it in terms of domestic and agricultural labour and her ability to bear children. The fact that she had been brought into the household by her parents-in-law not only weakened the conjugal tie, but also emphasised her dependence on and obedience to her parents-in-law and hence reduced the possibility of eventual household division. Parental authority combined with the consent of the parties enabled the older generation to maintain their controls and at the same time be relieved of total responsibility in making the ultimate choice in the selection of spouses. Most of the anthropological field workers in Taiwan have reported the relief expressed by the older generation as a result of the new modifications. They absolve the parents of sole responsibility and should the marriage not turn out to be satisfactory, they can remind the young people that they agreed to the match and must therefore share some responsibility (Wolf, 1972: 102; Gallin, 1946: 206; Bessac, 1965: 24-5). Parents also thought that in present-day Taiwan arranged marriage was much more likely to end in the dissolution of the household, and their acceptance of the new modification was like an insurance policy taken out in the interests of buttressing familial solidity and stabilising and preserving family unity (Gallin, 1967: 6-7).

Many of the field studies of rural areas comment on the collusion of the young in the new modified form which allows them negative sanctions as opposed to initiating negotiations on their own behalf. As in the People's Republic of China, the initiation of the negotiations by the younger generation presupposes at least some form of contact, dating or courtship patterns, and these institutional pre-conditions are also lacking in rural Taiwan and not yet fully established patterns of social behaviour in the cities (Gallin, 1966: 202; Marsh and O'Hara, 1961: 6; Diamond, 1969: 41). From the age of eight years, except for a few

occasions when they work side by side, village adolescents have little contact with others of the opposite sex, and there are few opportunities to meet and become acquainted in the countryside which do not attract attention, embarrassment and even ridicule. The fear of rebuff, the absence of prescriptions for their own initiation of the negotiations, and the almost certain opposition it would arouse, caused many to bow willingly to parental choice. They really had no particular preferences of their own to set against those of their parents. Even in the cities, where courting patterns were more established, couples seen together were assumed to be formally engaged or open to the charges of promiscuity (Diamond, 1969: 53; Schak, 1973: 165). Some of the reasons given to field workers for their acceptance of parental guidance and choice reveal a basic lack of confidence on the part of the younger generation: 'I am not able to choose one'; 'parents are more reliable'; 'I have no money nor am I good looking' (O'Hara, 1962: 63); or 'if parents think he or she is acceptable then it must be all right' (Gallin, 1966: 206). It is a lack of confidence fostered by the older generation. As a middle-aged mother explained to another field worker,

> 'If you let your parents arrange your marriage for you, your reputation will be better. People will say that you are a good girl because you allow your parents to decide all this for you.'
>
> (Wolf, 1972: 103)

In this manner the older generation may retain their controls and the younger generation seems to leave the responsibility for the final selection of mates to the parents and make no further attempt to actively participate in their own marriage negotiations (Bessac, 1965: 24-5; Gallin, 1966: 207).

The most recent innovation to be introduced into marriage negotiations in Taiwan is a more extensive modification of the traditional ideological

model in that their initiation passes into the hands of the young. This new model gained currency in the urban areas and especially in Taibei among the middle classes although, according to field workers, it is by no means universally practised in the cities and has barely penetrated the rural areas (Bessac, 1965: 24-5; Wolf, M., 1972: 101). In a survey undertaken among 651 university undergraduates in Taibei, 87 per cent of the respondents would have liked to choose their own marriage partners, but only 58 per cent expected to be able to do so (Marsh and O'Hara, 1961: 5). Those that do select their own spouse usually make their selection as the result of casual, informal introductions by friends and relatives or social mingling in peer groups at places of work or study or in going to and from them. Generally dating is in groups, undertaken indirectly through messages and letters or under some kind of informal chaperonage unless couples have reached an understanding that should lead to an engagement. The opportunities for initiating contact tended to circumscribe the friendship circles and make for homogamous, socio-economic and ethnic marriages. The most detailed study of courtship and patterns of marriage in Taibei illustrated that the qualities desired in a spouse were a combination of romantic ideals and practical considerations (Schak, 1973: 220). Although the younger generation, and girls more than boys, identified with the cause of romantic love and show a strong desire for a lasting love and companionship by ranking common interests and personality traits high on the list of desirable criteria, women also desire a marriage which will be able to support them and give them financial security. Men, on the other hand, seem to be looking for someone who will fulfil the roles of wife and mother and display all the qualities that were traditionally associated with such roles, rather than individual companionship (Schak, 1973: 222, 229). Another study (Abbott,

1970: 153) confirms that girls were primarily chosen as potential wives and mothers, and this criterion reflects the common truncation of public and career roles by urban middle class women in Taibei after marriage (Diamond, 1973).

Dating or going for short walks, to the movies, parties or parks or coffee houses is generally done without the parents' knowledge at least until the couple has established a firm relationship. The reason for this secrecy is to prevent the older generation surveying the dating partner as potential son- or daughter-in-law before the young people are sure of themselves (Schak, 1973: 211). The approval of the parents is still generally sought as a pre-requisite to the match and in one recent survey many young people anticipated that should their parents strongly disapprove them would give up their date (Schak, 1973: 212). Although the young couple might choose their own partners, the fact that the marriage negotiations are still formally negotiated by the heads of households, who continue to employ a go-between or some other third party to arrange the formal engagement and exchange of gifts, . makes it difficult to disregard their wishes. Some parents are willing to let the young persons make the initial choice and check it out for themselves through friends, relatives or a formal go-between before embarking on the traditional ceremonial sequences. One field worker quoted a woman whose son had married a girl he had chosen from a neighbouring household as saying

> 'The best thing is to let the boy and girl make their choice, and then have a go-between to discuss the engagement with both sets of parents, arrange what gifts are to be exchanged. Then, on the wedding day, you invite relatives and friends to the ceremony, and have a big celebration.'
>
> (Diamond, 1969: 55)

Young people already familiar with each other would go through the formalities of a <u>miai</u> or traditionally arranged marriage <u>as if</u> they were

total strangers. Several field studies refer to the camouflage or facade adopted by families to suggest that a marriage conforming to the traditional ideological model is in fact taking place in order to maintain 'face' or acquire an aura of respectability (Diamond, 1969: 55; Schak, 1973: 213; Bessac, 1965: 24-5).

Ideological impetus for change

In examining the variety of immediate conscious models in Taiwan, they show remarkable similarities to those characteristic of the People's Republic of China, but there is one important difference. The absence of a new ideological model has meant that changes in marriage patterns in Taiwan are primarily viewed as modifications of the traditional ideological model. It is frequently the latter's characteristics which are used as a facade to obscure modifications and as the yardstick against which to measure changes in marriage negotiations. Placing the traditional ideological and immediate conscious models on a continuum there is no clear juxtaposition of old and new ideological models. The ideological impetus for change is weak in Taiwan and, if anything, change in the norms of family life are discouraged. Although the 1931 Family Law, still applicable in Taiwan, introduced some changes in these norms (see Chapter 2), it has not so far been used in rural areas to implement changes that would undermine the traditional ideological model (Cohen, M., 1976: 82). The models in the Taiwanese media tend to reflect the old ideological model in which traditional values and patterns of interaction are retained and often praised (Abbott, 1970: 165). In the media the patriarchal sources of authority within the household are usually upheld and those who attempt to institutionalise changes or oppose it in any way

are severely disadvantaged as a result and often come to a tragic end. For example, stories portraying situations of conflict between the generations over the right to choose or the qualities of a spouse conclude in favour of the parents' judgement. In one of these stories, a couple who elope without the approval and consent of their parents come to an ill-fated end in which the girl commits suicide and the boy marries the girl originally chosen for him by his parents (Schak, 1973: 113-14). These morality tales promise tragedy to those who ignore the traditional patterns of obligation and authority which mark filial parent-child relations.

The concepts and norms exhibited by the foreign media circulated in Taiwan came closest to introducing a new ideological model in marriage negotiations. Periodicals, films, records and books imported from North America and Europe present a very different model of male-female relationships, though their import is by no means unchecked by the censors and they are in limited circulation within Taiwan (Schak, 1973: 117). Viewers of foreign films may learn of the movie version of courting patterns and marriage negotiations with their emphasis on selection by physical attraction and the state of being in love. Through these films they become aware that these love matches are the norm in Europe, North America and Japan (Diamond, 1969: 53). But these recent incursions of Western romanticism include no sustained discussion on the form and content of the alternative forms of negotiation such as criteria for choice of spouse, the appropriate age and stability of marriage and the symbolism of ritual and ceremonial forms, let alone a new concept of conjugal relations. Couples were assumed to live happily ever after once 'Mr Right' came along and proposed after an extremely romantic courtship. According to one recent study few students at a university in Taibei

understood the content or meaning of American dating customs although they were all familiar with the forms they took (Schak, 1973: 20). The same anthropologist observed that even the forms which dating took provided little in the way of role models or reference groups, for to most Chinese they were either too alien and even immoral or too direct and brazen (Schak, 1973:170). Thus they did not constitute any well defined or acceptable role models for young people to follow in introducing and institutionalising new courtship rituals and marriage negotiations. Schak who undertook one of the most recent studies of marriage in Taibei has suggested that the confusion, uncertainty and anxiety experienced by young people there is reminiscent of that described by the sociologist Ai Li-chin for Republican China in 1948 (see p. 76). (1973: 169). Most anthropologists have concluded that the contemporary role models and reference groups of the media provided little competition for the traditional norms regarding kinship and parental authority in conducting marriage negotiations.

The dispersal of households and primary groups

When we turn from a study of marriage patterns to their relationship to the structure and function of household and primary groups, further and significant differences between the two social fields emerge. Anthropologists who have worked in Taiwan are more inclined to stress the primacy of economic causes in explaining the changes in the negotiation of marriage which have taken place in their social fields. Without exception, they attribute the increasing independence of the individual from their household and the household from the rural village or community to the recent industrialisation and urbanisation of Taiwan. They describe

the rapid rate of industrialisation which has taken place in Taiwan in the last twenty years and the expansion of urban conglomerates to include numbers of textile, garment, electronics and chemical drug factories and their demands for a mobile labour force (Diamond, 1973: 213). The growth of the wage-labour market has affected life in the rural areas. The agricultural labourer who was primarily involved in a basically subsistence type of agriculture and formely had ties to the land and the village community has become more and more incorporated into the market economy of the country. He now has widespread contacts with and knowledge of the urban social field. One of the major impacts of the policies of industrialisation and urbanisation has been the permanent or temporary migration of large numbers of rural residents to work in the expanding commercial and industrial sector (Gallin, 1966: 2-3, 48). The concurrent expansion of formal education into rural areas, particularly beyond that of the elementary school level, meant that more young people in the village wanted to take advantage of the white-collar occupational opportunities opening up outside the village.

More and more farm households have encouraged this outward migration as they themselves can no longer support all their members from agricultural sources. The increasing ratio of head of population to land has restricted the possibilities of continued land division and many families have found it difficult to make optimum use of all household labour on the farm. The pressures on land are aggravated by the fact that few landowners are now willing to rent out their land. The land reform and recent agrarian policies on the side of the lessee have rendered tenanted land unprofitable as well as difficult to recover and sell (Pasternak, 1972: 68). As a result, rural households have little opportunity to augment inadequate holdings and instead may try to keep the family farm intact by directing

and encouraging some of their members to take advantage of the new opportunities for seasonal and permanent employment to supplement the family income. This had the effect of decreasing the number of persons involved in the agricultural sector. In 1961 it was estimated that 55 per cent of the population were so employed in comparison to 71 per cent in 1915 (O'Hara, 1962: 60). In Hsin Hsing village, Gallin estimated that the proportion of income from agricultural sources had fallen to just 65 per cent of the total income of each household (1966: 34-5).

Most anthropologists undertaking village studies comment on the importance of migration and the lure of factory work for the position of the younger generation within the household. Norma Diamond found that in K'un Shen many of the younger people there looked for factory jobs in its vicinity and commuted on a daily basis (1969: 20). Marjorie Wolf commented on the increasing proportion of young people working in factories in 1968 compared to her earlier visit in 1958. She remarked that working in a factory after primary school was now almost as automatic for girls as going from the fourth to the fifth grade, and she described how literally hundreds of women boarded buses and trucks to go to factories that ringed the southern edge of Taibei (1972: 98-9). In Hsin Hsing village, Bernard Gallin found that many young villagers, especially the men, lived temporarily or permanently in Taibei to work in the factories and supplement the incomes of the village households (1966: 34-5). The dispersal of the jia members on a temporary or permanent basis was explained by the anthropologist as essentially economic in function in that it was a movement to diversify the economic basis of the family and a device to secure greater economic security (Tang, 1973: 265-6; Cohen, M., 1976: 78). The availability of new opportunities for employment had had important repercussions for the role of the young within the

household and the role of the household within the village community.

The policies of urbanisation and industrialisation with their concomitant effects on mobility have enabled the young to assert their independence from the older generation. The authority of the head of the household is tempered by the fact that he is no longer the sole provider of the annual income and the salaried younger generation is no longer dependent on the family estate. Moreover, it is they who contribute an important cash component of the family income and have acquired a new bargaining position with which to resist the traditional authority of the parents to monopolise marriage negotiations. Sons and daughters have proved to be less willing to return to their villages and marry a spouse they have had no part in selecting, let alone one they have never sighted. Those who do choose their own mate may in the face of sustained parental opposition break with their families and move away from the village. The option to migrate, the partial and necessary dependence on cash income and the increasing independence of the rural household from agriculture has weakened the solidarity of informal social fields and dispersed village and lineage ties.

One of the most significant social changes affecting rural households in Taiwan that has been cited by anthropologists working there, has been the extension of household contacts far beyond the immediate village environs to the urban centres. The elaboration of these networks caused by the incorporation of the previously cohesive and tightly-knit villages into a broader economy less bounded by the village has been seen to weaken community organisation and solidarity. Gallin is one anthropologist who has made much of the rapid functional deterioration in the internal social organisation of the village and the increasing independence of each

individual household within it. The household no longer finds it advantageous to focus on inter-relationships within the village which in turn no longer possesses the means to meet its needs. In the competition for outside resources, the rural household welcomes the dispersal of its ties beyond the village and alliances established through opportune marriages have taken on a new importance. The younger generation may be more independent of the rural household, but at the same time the older generation increasingly conceives of marriage ties outside the village as potential sources of additional labour, capital, water, loans, access to networks for support in elections and exchanges of visits during local festivals (Pasternak, 1972: 61). Parents in the rural social field themselves admit that since the conditions of their social environment are now so different, it may be better to relinquish this monopoly of the controls and modify the traditional marriage negotiations which still gives them some measure of control but does not entirely exclude participation by the younger generation (Gallin, 1967: 5).

Analogies with the People's Republic of China

In Taiwan, then, the studies of anthropologists would suggest that economic changes have primarily enforced adaptations to the traditional ideological model of arranged marriage. The independence of the individual from the rural household and the household from the village are identified as the significant social changes in rural Taiwan and these are directly attributed to the current economic policies of industrialisation and urbanisation. As for Republican China, there has been a tendency among the anthropologists of Taiwan to use their experience and findings from this province to correlate the forces working for social change and

the factors encouraging persistence in their own social fields and in the People's Republic. Perhaps the anthropologist who has stretched these parallels to their limits is Bernard Gallin. He concluded that, although there were qualitative and quantitative differences between various areas in the People's Republic of China, there was no doubt in his mind that by observing and analysing the nature of social change in Taiwan, anthropologists could derive some insights into social developments taking place in the People's Republic of China. For, he says, 'many of the changes taking place both in Taiwan and in the People's Republic of China are primarily due to the same cause - the encroachment of urbanisation on a traditional agrarian culture whether enforced by the Japanese, the National Chinese or the Communists' (1966: 4). He suggests that it is part of the Communist policy of social development to break down the large kinship groups in order to accelerate the process of urbanisation. He suggests that the establishment of the rural communes is one technique designed to catalyse the urbanisation process. Thus he attributes the supposed breakdown of the traditional village and kinship and family relations in the People's Republic not to the introduction of communism and its ideological attack on such traditional Chinese concepts as large family and kinship groups, but as in Taiwan to similar socio-economic changes associated with industrialisation and urbanisation. He arrives at this conclusion after his studies of Taiwan where, he says,

> 'the process of culture change has not been under the influence of a communist or other new ideology. Here it appears to be a result of such developments as socio-economic factors and improved communications which increasingly draw the rural areas into closer contact and relationship with the changing urban and industrial forms of life.'
>
> (1966: 281)

The negation of the new ideological model in introducing new marriage patterns has also been a feature of the previous studies by scholars of the People's Republic of China. Writing in 1958, with the advantage of several years of direct and indirect observation since 1950, C.K. Yang thought that the direction of social change under the Communist Party contained no new substance (1959: 18). In the early 1960s William Goode analysed the links between the process of industrialisation and family patterns in China and concluded that the acceleration of industrial development and urbanisation in the People's Republic would continue and lead to the greater exercise of free-choice marriage and the establishment of some type of conjugal family (1963: 270). He based his conclusion as much on an important component of modernisation theory which links economic development and family type as on the study of marriage patterns in contemporary China itself. Although in this work he attacked the conventional formula that industrialisation undermined the extended family, he continued to view the individualisation and isolation of the nuclear or conjugal family as the most fundamental of the social changes associated with industrialisation. He has suggested that the rise of the nuclear family preceded industrialisation and was a pre-requisite for the establishment of the latter. Since industrialisation above all demanded a mobile and enterprising labour force unhampered by extended kin and lineage ties, he thought that the establishment of the conjugal family with few reciprocal obligations between the generations or kin may be the independent variable. Although he concludes that it may be the prior and irresistible appeal of the ideology of the conjugal family with its corollary of free-choice marriage to the oppressed, the younger and educated generation and especially women, which was responsible for modifying the traditional family and kinship

structures, and he explains industrialisation by the broader ideological and economic processes of 'modernisation', he nevertheless continues to assume a universal 'fit' between industrialisation and the small family system. That is, the degree to which the extended family type has been replaced by the conjugal form in a social field reflects the degree of industrialisation and urbanisation. As the demand for a mobile and qualified labour force increases, so does the presence of free-choice marriages and conjugal households. Moreover, he argues that this is a universal phenomenon and in China, as in other countries, economic and ideological factors are uniformly working to move familial structures in the direction of the conjugal form (1963: 320).

In taking either Taiwan or Republican China as empirical analogies, or 'modernisation theory' as a conceptual framework, social scientists like Gallin, Levy, Yang or Goode are correlating certain parallel characteristics in the marriage negotiations common to Republican China, Taiwan and the People's Republic with common causes. My research argues against this correlation, for in rural areas it is the causes which differ. While in Republican China and Taiwan it is the economic changes which primarily forced adaptations to the traditional ideological model, in the People's Republic the economic policies in rural areas have had precisely the opposite effect on the socio-economic patterns of rural social life. They have reinforced the interdependence of the individual on the household, restricted mobility, and solidified kin and village ties, all of which have worked against the implementation of the new ideological model of marriage. The role of the economic policies in inhibiting the adaptation of the new ideological model suggests that in the People's Republic we may have a reversal of the primary forces working for social change in rural areas. If we challenge the assumptions

that the adoption of new marriage patterns in rural China is not the exclusive result of 'economic factors and closer contact and relationships with the changing urban and industrial forms of life', and this thesis argues that we must, how are we to assess the role of the ideological model itself in the process of social change?

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSIONS

The emphasis on the role of ideology in introducing and maintaining processes of social change has been an important component of the revolutionary strategy in the People's Republic of China. In their analysis of the important and complex relationship between the economic 'base' and the ideological superstructure, their theories of social change not only reject the crass determinism of the base on the superstructure, but allow for the possibility that under certain circumstances ideology has its own power or effectivity to determine the base. The function assigned to ideology in Chinese society, and the emphasis placed on its communication, reflects the upgrading of the importance of the ideology as a level or an instance of the social formation and the quite central belief that ideology and organisation can serve as substitutes for the development of the material forces, at least within certain limits, until conditions allow industrialisation and the development of the economic base. The emphasis on the role of ideology as an agent of social change has been particularly noticeable throughout the movement to establish a new system of marriage. The variety of marriage patterns in China today, however, do not reflect the unqualified dominance of the new ideological model, rather they incorporate both pre-existing marriage customs and concessions to the new system of marriage introduced in 1950.

In the negotiation of marriage, four main types can be distinguished according to the patterns of control and authority which they exhibit. They range from type (1) in which the negotiations, from their initiation to their conclusion, are entirely monopolised by the older generation or parents to the type where the controls are exclusively operated by the

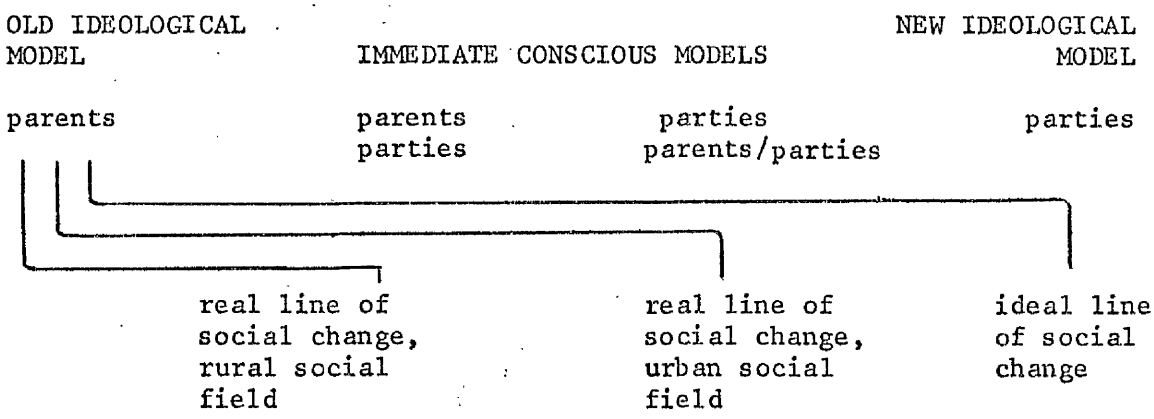
parties to the negotiations. The models, therefore, can be placed on a continuum according to the degree of parental and parties' participation in the negotiations, and in evaluating the relative weight of the control and authority of each, the main dividing line on the continuum coincided with the point at which the parties take over the initial negotiations. All the available evidence suggested that this point roughly coincided with the division into the rural and urban social fields and the dominance of primary groups over the influence of political associations.

In the subsequent studies of pre-marital ritual, the age of marriage, choice of marriage partner and ceremonial forms, there was found to be a close correlation between their forms and the patterns of authority and control characteristic of the negotiations. When the older generation initiated the negotiations, the preliminary procedures were much more likely to take the form of betrothal, whereas if the younger generation personally took over the initiation of the negotiations, courtship, albeit often at a low level of institutionalisation, became the dominant pre-marital form. The majority of pre-marital rituals included the modalities of both betrothal and courtship, for each has commonly been modified to provide for the mechanisms of consent or shared controls by parents and parties. Despite the constant efforts of the government to raise the age of marriage, it is likely to be nearer the legal than the 'appropriate' age in the rural areas where the older generation initiates the negotiations. In the choice of a marriage partner, whether by the older or younger generation, the customary norms of homogamy have predominated over the recommended ones of heterogamy. It seems as if the principles of homogamy and hypergamy defined in terms of both socio-economic and political status have enjoyed wide support in Chinese society, at least before the Cultural Revolution. The case studies incorporating

heterogamous marriages, especially those negotiated between partners of differing socio-economic and urban and rural backgrounds, indicate, however, that where the younger generation initiated the marriage negotiations themselves, there was at least the possibility of a heterogamous marriage. Equally, where the negotiations were initiated by the older generation they were more likely to adopt an elaborate series of prestations and ceremonial forms than in the negotiations initiated by the younger generation.

The correlation between the controls of the negotiations and the procedures followed at each stage of the negotiations can be summed up as follows: where mates are primarily acquired by persons other than the parties, there is more likely to be a betrothal, a lower age of marriage, a homogamous or hypergamous marriage and elaborate ceremonial forms. Likewise, where the negotiations are conducted by the parties themselves there is more likely to be a period of courtship, a higher age of marriage, simpler ceremonial forms, and there is at least the possibility of a heterogamous marriage. As we have seen, most of the contemporary marriage patterns combine elements characteristic of both the traditional and new ideological models and derive from patterns of social behaviour evolved in the last two decades to mediate the competition between the older and younger generations for control of the marriage partners and between primary groups and political associations for the control of marriage patterns. The conflict between the two has commonly been resolved in favour of the older generation in rural areas and of the younger generation in the urbal social field. The projected line of social change proposed and introduced into China by the government in 1950 can be contrasted with the actual lines which social change has taken in the past two decades.

Figure 13: Ideal and Real Lines of Social Change for the Negotiation of Marriage



In explaining the variety of marriage patterns the Chinese government has constantly suggested that it is the conservatism and persistence of old ideas which inhibit the nation-wide establishment of new marriage customs. In the 1950s, before and in the midst of profound economic changes, the introduction of new marriage patterns was seen to be dependent on a 'battle in which new ideas were pitted against the old' (P's C, 16 November 1957). Since the 1950s the amount of social change has been correlated with the degree of exposure to, and education in, the meanings of the new ideological model and the ability of political associations to overcome the competing influences from kin, neighbours and friends. One article posed the problem in the following words:

> 'We all have our own families, parents, brothers/sisters and relatives. While in our own society the growth of youth depends mainly on the education of the Party and the State, the ideological influence of families and friends also produces an important effect on this process.'
>
> (ZQ, 16 September 1963)

The attitudes of conservatism which characterise primary groups have been repeatedly identified as the primary obstacle to social change in rural areas, and much attention has been given to the need to persuade,

educate and convince the primary groups of the advantages of the new ideological model. In the role models and reference groups portrayed in the media, for example, the point at which change takes place is seen to coincide with the acceptance of the new norms by the primary groups. In Houwang village in Fujian province, it was reported that when the idea of late marriage was first introduced it was the older members of households and kin groups who had to be persuaded of its benefits. For long gossip had it that those who waited to marry late were thought 'to be still stuck with the family, although their hair is turning grey' or that 'they were becoming inferior goods which nobody wants'. Apparently as a result of education these sayings lost their efficacy and it was at that point that late marriage was said to have become the common practice in the village (RMRB, 12 June 1973).

In appraising strategies for social change that emphasise the role of ideology in introducing and maintaining new directions, as in situations of 'culture contact' or in China and the Soviet Union, it is not uncommon to attribute the retention of old forms to the degree of culture contact with the new ideology (Schapera, 1956) or the limits of its communication (Geiger, 1968). The latter example from the Soviet Union raises interesting parallels with the People's Republic of China for both Communist governments attach great importance to ideas and to will as levers for social change. In the Soviet Union the introduction of a new ideology of family, kinship and marriage has had a similar effect of generating conflict between the generations and the informal and formal social fields, and again particularly so in the rural areas. In his study of the role of the family in the Soviet Union, Geiger has suggested that the struggle between the rapid and radical changes in the orientation of youth fostered by the political authority and the traditionally sanctioned

attitudes of parents in rural areas can be correlated with the degree of familiarity with the new ideology. He argues that the school system, the youth groups, the organisations and the media through which the new ideology is communicated, are far more effectively developed in urban areas than in the countryside (1968: 231). In defence of his arguments he cites the evidence from Rossi and Bauer's study of the differential exposure of various population groups to the mass media which has described the Soviet collective farmer as a person who is 'almost isolated from the communications network' (1953: 658). He concludes that in this situation the new ideology provides little competition for the strength of traditional peasant religious and political attitudes.

Unlike the Soviet Union, it can be argued that in China in nearly every case study recorded in the media, the correspondents, both rural and urban based, were aware of the contents of the new ideological model. There was an awareness that the initiatives in the negotiation of marriage should have passed to the younger generation, an understanding of the reasons why betrothal should be discarded, an appreciation of the new criteria for choice of marriage partner and a consciousness of the advantages of raising the age of marriage and reducing the expenses and ceremonial associated with marriage. The correspondents might not necessarily agree with the new ideological model, and may even argue vehemently against it, but they were certainly aware of the changes which it advocated. If ideological models can be demonstrated to be reasonably uniformly distributed, then the retention of old forms cannot be interpreted as manifestations of mere social conservatism or isolation from the communications networks. Rather, the presence of the new ideological model must be considered as one of the forces working for social change and it must be possible to isolate other variables which account for the varieties in marriage patterns.

The general findings of my research indicate that it is possible to isolate other factors which account for the range of marriage patterns. This thesis has argued that the degree of parental control over the marriage negotiations is directly correlated to (a) the structure and function of the household and (b) the degree to which households are encapsulated by overlapping primary groups. These hypotheses are based on a coincidence of differing patterns of marriage in rural and urban areas with the contrasting functions of the household and primary groups in the rural and urban economies. What has emerged from an examination of the domestic groups in both the rural and urban social fields is a direct correlation between household composition, the economic interdependence of its members and the degree of parental participation in the procedures of mate selection. Where, as in rural areas, the accumulation of resources of the domestic group encourages the co-residence and econom ic interdependence of its members, the older generation has worked to maintain its controls over the recruitment of new members. Where, as in urban areas, the household is less a unit of production and consumption, and community facilities are more likely to service the individual household, the younger generation are more likely to have acquired a certain measure of control. Far from discouraging a degree of familial control over marriage, the new economic policies continue to allow the very structure and functions of the patrilocal domestic group to work against the implementation of new marriage patterns in the rural social field.

The introduction of new models of marriage has brought the traditional influence and authority of the primary kin and neighbourhood groups into competition with that of political associations. At every stage of the marriage negotiations the older generation was likely to have the support of kin and neighbours and it is their influence which the

younger generation, even with the support of political associations, found difficult to counter. The degree to which they did so was found to vary with the immediate social environment of individuals and households. Where primary groups of kin, neighbours and friends overlapped and encapsulated the individual, they were more likely to provide the dominant reference group and unidirectional social pressures in support of the older generation. Moreover, it can be argued that the primary groups, far from being weakened as a result of the establishment of new political associations, have not only continued to overlap in rural village settlements to form a simple concrete and close-knit group, but that the inter-relationship within these groups has been formalised and institutionalised by the new demographic and economic policies. The reduction in migration and movement and the institutionalisation of economic ties within and between the villages by the reorganisation of the relations of production and the establishment of rural communes has had the effect of maintaining, if not solidifying, the bonds between the individual households and the primary kin and neighbourhood groups. It is the structure and function of the overlapping primary groups in rural areas which have enabled them to maintain a certain measure of solidarity, retain certain sanctions at their disposal and remain the primary or single most important reference group for the household in rural China. In comparison to the urban social field, the structure and function of the rural household has encouraged the older generation to defy the new ideological model and maintain their control of marriage procedures and it is the structure and function of primary groups in rural areas which has enabled them to retain these controls.

In correlating marriage patterns with both socio-economic relations within the household and between the households and primary kin or

neighbourhood groups, this thesis has challenged the previous assumptions about social change in contemporary China. It questions the analogies drawn from comparable social fields which attribute change in rural areas to economic variables to do with industrialisation and urbanisation, and which negate the role of the new ideological model. It also questions the analyses influenced by that apparent within China itself which interprets the process of social change primarily in terms of the battle between old and new ideologies. At the very least both interpretations of social change operate on the common assumption that economic and ideological agencies are working in a uniform direction of social change. This may be so in urban China, but at the present conjuncture, the structure and function of the domestic and primary group have inhibited the establishment of the new ideological model in rural areas. The identification and analysis of the specific variables working for and against social change within marriage patterns in rural China suggest that in this instance economic and ideological variables each have a certain sphere of operation and interact in opposition to each other.

The new ideological model of marriage has been assigned a major role in the conscious rearrangement of relations between the generations, the sexes, and between domestic, kin and other groups. Changes in the system of marriage have not only been primarily interpreted in terms of ideological change, but its ideology has become an important part of a strategy for wider social change. Reforms within the institution of marriage to represent new inter-personal rather than inter-group relations have become one of the main vehicles by which the state has intervened and attempted to articulate major changes in the relations within and between domestic groups. The new forms of marriage do represent a modification of the relations between the generations and between the sexes and within

kin groups despite the fact that the traditional structures have remained or have even been elaborated. The fact that economic policies, and to a lesser extent ideology, have worked to maintain the traditional structures of the household and primary groups suggests that it is the new ideological model of marriage, and to a lesser extent economic policies, which have modified social relations within and between these structures in rural areas. For instance, socio-economic and demographic factors have encouraged the maintenance or even expansion of the complex household, but the new ideology of marriage has worked to modify the patterns of authority within the household both between the generations and between the sexes. Despite the tension between the two variables, the measure of change introduced into these social relations is some testimony of the autonomy of ideology. That is, it can be seen to primarily motivate and impel changes in social behaviour despite the maintenance of traditional structures. At the same time the character of the new ideological model has itself been modified in part and shaped by social structures maintained by current economic policies.

Not only has the new ideological model been frequently redefined, but the degree of competition, tension and conflict between the aims of the new ideological model and the socio-economic processes have been responsible for the development of a variety of immediate conscious models. In the most recent of village studies published in the 1970s, the author who lived in the village of Upper Felicity for a year observed that despite far-reaching changes there in marriage customs, many traditional attitudes still persisted. He thought that the nature of change in this institution had been more subtle than in other social institutions, and it could be said to be at a 'half-way stage' that reflected the present stage of wider social relations and outlook in the village

(Chen, 1973: 60). This thesis reveals that the variety in marriage patterns represent both a significant departure from previous marriage customs, a concession to the new ideological model and very significantly an adjustment to contemporary economic policies. The study also suggests that the syncretic models identified in the rural social field will only be substituted by the new ideological model as the dominant conscious model when government policies take cognisance of the fact that marriage not only has consequences for, but is also a consequence of socio-economic structures. At this point ideological and economic factors may once again begin to combine social forces in the one strategy, a strategy which would uniformly substitute the procedures and symbols of marriage, and articulate major changes in social relations between the generations, the sexes, social strata, and between domestic and kin groups.

APPENDIX 1

THE MARRIAGE LAW OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Adopted by the Central People's Government Council at Its 7th Meeting on April 13, 1950. Promulgated on May 1, 1950 by order of the Chairman of the Central People's Government on April 30, 1950

Chapter I

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

ARTICLE 1

The feudal marriage system based on arbitrary and compulsory arrangements and the supremacy of man over woman, and in disregard of the interests of the children, is abolished.

The New-Democratic marriage system, which is based on the free choice of partners, on monogamy, on equal rights for both sexes, and on the protection of the lawful interests of women and children, in put into effect.

ARTICLE 2

Bigamy, concubinage, child betrothal, interference in the re-marriage of widows, and the exaction of money or gifts in connection with marriages, are prohibited.

Chapter II

THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT

ARTICLE 3

Marriage is based upon the complete willingness of the two parties. Neither party shall use compulsion and no third party is allowed to interfere.

ARTICLE 4

A marriage can be contracted only after the man has reached 20 years of age and the woman 18 years of age.

ARTICLE 5

No man or woman is allowed to marry in any of the following instances:

(a) Where the man and woman are lineal relatives by blood or where the man and woman are brother and sister born of the same parents or where the man and woman are half-brother and half-sister. The question of prohibiting marriage between collateral relatives by blood (up to the fifth degree of relationship) is determined by custom.

(b) Where one party, because of certain physical defects, is sexually impotent.

(c) Where one party is suffering from venereal disease, mental disorder, leprosy or any other disease which is regarded by medical science as rendering a person unfit for marriage.

ARTICLE 6

In order to contract a marriage, both the man and the woman should register in person with the people's government of the district or township in which they reside. If the proposed marriage is found to be in conformity with the provisions of this Law, the local people's government should, without delay, issue marriage certificates.

If the proposed marriage is not found to be in conformity with the provisions of this Law, registration should not be granted.

Chapter III

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

ARTICLE 7

Husband and wife are companions living together and enjoy equal status in the home.

ARTICLE 8

Husband and wife are in duty bound to love, respect, assist and look after each other, to live in harmony, to engage in productive work, to care for their children and to strive jointly for the welfare of the family and for the building up of the new society.

ARTICLE 9

Both husband and wife have the right to free choice of occupation and free participation in work or in social activities.

ARTICLE 10

Husband and wife have equal rights in the possession and management of family property.

ARTICLE 11

Husband and wife have the right to use his or her own family name.

ARTICLE 12

Husband and wife have the right to inherit each other's property.

Chapter IV

RELATIONS BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN

ARTICLE 13

Parents have the duty to rear and to educate their children; the children have the duty to support and to assist their parents. Neither the parents nor the children shall maltreat or desert one another.

The foregoing provision also applies to foster-parents and foster-children.

Infanticide by drowning and similar criminal acts are strictly prohibited.

ARTICLE 14

Parents and children have the right to inherit one another's property.

ARTICLE 15

Children born out of wedlock enjoy the same rights as children born in lawful wedlock. No person is allowed to harm them or discriminate against them.

Where the paternity of a child born out of wedlock is legally established by the mother of the child or by other witnesses or material evidence, the identified father must bear the whole or part of the cost of maintenance and education of the child until the age of 18.

With the consent of the mother, the natural father may have custody of the child.

With regard to the maintenance of a child born out of wedlock, if its mother marries, the provisions of Article 22 apply.

ARTICLE 16

Neither husband nor wife may maltreat or discriminate against children born of a previous marriage by either party and in that party's custody.

Chapter V

DIVORCE

ARTICLE 17

Divorce is granted when husband and wife both desire it. In the event of either the husband or the wife alone insisting upon divorce, it may be granted only when mediation by the district people's government and the judicial organ has failed to bring about a reconciliation.

In cases where divorce is desired by both husband and wife, both parties should register with the district people's government in order to obtain divorce certificates. The district people's government, after establishing that divorce is desired by both parties and that appropriate measures have been taken for the care of children and property, should issue the divorce certificates without delay.

When one party insists on divorce, the district people's government may try to effect a reconciliation. If such mediation fails, it should, without delay, refer the case to the county or municipal people's court for decision. The district people's government should not attempt to prevent or to obstruct either party from appealing to the county or municipal people's court. In dealing with a divorce case, the county or municipal people's court should, in the first instance, try to bring about a reconciliation between the parties. In case such mediation fails, the court should render a decision without delay.

After divorce, if both husband and wife desire the resumption of marriage relations, they should apply to the district people's government for a registration of re-marriage. The district people's government should accept such a registration and issue certificates of re-marriage.

ARTICLE 18

The husband is not allowed to apply for a divorce when his wife is pregnant, and may apply for divorce only one year after the birth of the child. In the case of a woman applying for divorce, this restriction does not apply.

ARTICLE 19

In the case of a member of the revolutionary army on active service who maintains correspondence with his or her family, that army member's consent must be obtained before his or her spouse can apply for divorce.

Divorce may be granted to the spouse of a member of the revolutionary army who does not correspond with his or her family for a period of two years subsequent to the date of the promulgation of this Law. Divorce may also be granted to the spouse of a member of the revolutionary army, who had not maintained correspondence with his or her family for over two years prior to the promulgation of this Law, and who fails to correspond with his or her family for a further period of one year subsequent to the promulgation of the present Law.

Chapter VI

MAINTENANCE AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AFTER DIVORCE

ARTICLE 20

The blood ties between parents and children are not ended by the divorce of the parents. No matter whether the father or the mother has the custody of the children, they remain the children of both parties.

After divorce, both parents continue to have the duty to support and educate their children.

After divorce, the guilding principle is to allow the mother to have the custody of a breast-fed infant. After the weaning of the child, if a dispute arises between the two parties over the guardianship and an agreement cannot be reached, the people's court should render a decision in accordance with the interests of the child.

ARTICLE 21

If, after divorce, the mother is given custody of a child, the father is responsible for the whole or part of the necessary cost of the maintenance and education of the child. Both parties should reach an agreement regarding the amount and the duration of such maintenance and education. Lacking such an agreement, the people's court should render a decision.

Payment may be made in cash, in kind or by tilling land allocated to the child.

An agreement reached between parents or a decision rendered by the people's court in connection with the maintenance and education of a child does not obstruct the child from requesting either parent to increase the amount decided upon by agreement or by judicial decision.

ARTICLE 22

In the case where a divorced woman re-marries and her husband is willing to pay the whole or part of the cost of maintaining and educating the child or children by her former husband, the father of the child or children is entitled to have such cost of maintenance and education reduced or to be exempted from bearing such cost in accordance with the circumstances.

Chapter VII

PROPERTY AND MAINTENANCE AFTER DIVORCE

ARTICLE 23

In case of divorce, the wife retains such property as belonged to her prior to her marriage. The disposal of other family property is subject to agreement between the two parties. In cases where agreement cannot be reached, the people's court should render a decision after taking into consideration the actual state of the family property, the interests of the wife and the child or children, and the principle of benefiting the development of production.

In cases where the property allocated to the wife and her child or children is sufficient for the maintenance and education of the child or children, the husband may be exempted from bearing further maintenance and education costs.

ARTICLE 24

In case of divorce, debts incurred jointly by husband and wife during the period of their married life should be paid out of the property jointly acquired by them during this period. In cases where

no such property has been acquired or in cases where such property is insufficient to pay off such debts, the husband is held responsible for paying them. Debts incurred separately by the husband or wife should be paid off by the party responsible.

ARTICLE 25

After divorce, if one party has not re-married and has maintenance difficulties, the other party should render assistance. Both parties should work out an agreement with regard to the method and duration of such assistance; in case an agreement cannot be reached, the people's court should render a decision.

Chapter VIII

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 26

Persons violating this Law will be punished in accordance with law. In cases where interference with the freedom of marriage has caused death or injury to one or both parties, persons guilty of such interference will bear responsibility for the crime before the law.

ARTICLE 27

This Law comes into force from the date of its promulgation.

In regions inhabited by minority nationalities in compact communities, the people's government (or the Military and Administrative Committee) of the Greater Administrative Area or the provincial people's government may enact certain modifications or supplementary articles in conformity with the actual conditions prevailing among minority

nationalities in regard to marriage. But such measures must be submitted to the Government Administrative Council for ratification before enforcement.

APPENDIX 2

SELECTED CASE STUDIES

The following six letters to the press are representative of those used in this study. In common, they give some background information about the correspondents, the expectations of friends, kin and peers and the kinds of dilemmas they experienced in negotiating a marriage. Examples have been chosen to give some idea of the variation in length and detail, the subject matter and the degree of conflict and anxiety expressed by the correspondents.

The negotiation of marriage

The first two letters are to do with the preliminary negotiations to marriage. The first represents the type of situation in which young people might have pressure put on them to be married. It illustrates a case of anxiety induced by conflict between the competing traditional inter-generational and new conjugal ties. In the second example the parties have themselves already initiated the negotiations for marriage, but the older generation have refused their consent to the match.

(a) Letter from Cheng Shuizhi of Anhui Medical College published in Zhongguo Qingnian 12 February 1963:

I have a problem which is giving me a great headache. Please let me have some advice on the best solution to my problem.

To begin with, I became a student at the Anhui Medical College two years ago. Last year in November my mother died of an illness and left my father, a younger brother and younger sister at home. On my return there during the winter vacation, my father said that without a housewife in the family, cooking and washing up gave them a great headache. In order that they have someone to manage the household, my father asked me if I would take a wife as a way out. My friends, relatives and neighbours joined him in persuading me. But I feel I cannot go along with them for several reasons. First as a student, I could not settle down without getting distracted from my studies. Secondly I have not yet found a girl I love who can double as a capable housekeeper. Thirdly to plunge blindly into an 'arranged' marriage would jeopardize any future happiness. It would be a great problem if family quarrels were the result of the choice of a wrong partner. But their argument is that as a filial son, I should go along with them, even if I have something to lose. Over one year has elapsed since their request. I have remained firm in my stand, but I feel very disturbed because some people have called me an unfilial son. The problem weighs heavily on my mind. I cannot concentrate on my study and work.

Comrade editor, what does 'filial piety' mean? Am I an unfilial son because I turn my back on an arranged marriage?

(b) Letter from Chen Hongting, Shaokuan, published in Nanfang Ribao 12 May 1962:

I am a cadre of a government organ. I was in love with a girl named Liu Muxue whom I was at school with. We prepared to get married last year as we both felt that our mutual love had ripened and that she was

leaving school for work. Before the Spring Festival this year, I told the 'secret' to both our parents. Contrary to my expectations, Liu Muxue's mother strongly opposed our marriage, saying that we could not be married and that my income was too small. At first my girlfriend did not mind very much about her parent's attitude, for she thought that her mother's muddle-headedness would give way to a reasonable attitude within a short time. But when we recently mentioned our matrimonial plans again, Liu's mother made quite a scene. She strongly voiced her disapproval and accused her daughter of being ungrateful to her. Although Liu knew that her mother's attitude was not right, she also felt that after all these years she was greatly indebted to her mother for having brought her up. She became very depressed by her mother's attitude, and feeling she was in a dilemma, she began to have second thoughts.

Comrade editor, I really do not know how to deal with this awkward situation. I would be grateful for some ideas and advice on how to resolve this situation and fulfil my dreams for our marriage.

Choice of marriage partner

In both the following letters, the correspondents describe how they had a choice of two potential spouses. Although they both in the end choose a spouse according to the criteria set down by the new ideological model, they describe the thought sequences and sources of influence involved in the process of making the choice. It is for the latter reasons that the letters are interesting.

(a) Letter from Gong Guihua published in Zhongguo Funu, 1 May 1964:

I am a cadre assigned to the lower level. In the course of choosing my prospective husband, I also have had a miserable time.

When I worked in a xian department store in 1958, I got acquainted with a college student studying in Nanjing. He was an upright man, sincere and honest. Before long, we fell in love.

Something unpleasant happened during our third meeting. As he went back home to visit his parents when his school closed for the summer vacation in 1959, he availed himself of the opportunity to stay in my place for half a month. In the beginning, we got along with each other very well. When I went to work in the daytime, he read books. In the evening, we either went to the cinema or took a stroll in the park. Several days later, he appeared to be rather reluctant to keep my company in the cinema house or in the park, for he would often tell me to go to bed a little earlier, even saying that staying out late and having a good time every evening would affect my work the following day. I also found out that he would read books whenever he had time. When I asked him to take me out and have some fun, he would tell me what he read from the book. I soon realized he was like a 'bookworm'. His life was too dull and he had no tender feelings for me. I therefore became dissatisfied with him.

It was at this moment that an old schoolmate of mine introduced me to a boy friend from the city. This man was more than ten years older than I, and apart from being quite wealthy, he was very tender to me. He knew how to please me and would occasionally take me out, such as taking a stroll in the street or in the park and patronizing restaurants. He even told me, 'If you like it, I shall be pleased to buy you some

woollen dress material.' Things like these impressed me greatly and, therefore, very soon we developed fond feelings for one another. Although I had the feeling that he was rather old, he had the advantage of being rich. But from his speech and utterances, I found that his thinking was not healthy enough and he lacked the vigorous spirit of youth. For instance, when I asked him why he was fond of me, he said, 'You are young and attractive, so how can I not like you? For example, who is not fond of playing with a pretty bird?'

After sizing them up by comparing one with the other, I found that both were admirable but at the same time not lovable at all. For one was upright and honest and had the ambition to forge ahead, while the other, though backward in thinking, was tender and rich. I was really at a loss to know which of the two I should love. It was at this moment that somebody criticized me for ignoring political factors when choosing a prospective husband and for being susceptible to monetary inducements. After hearing these words, ideological struggle within me became more intense. I began to suffer insomnia at night and a dizzy spell in the daytime. I also often made errors when doing my work.

The leadership of the company held talks with me several times, advising me to adopt a correct attitude toward the question of love and marriage and urging me to give first place to politics when choosing a husband. What the leadership told me was right, but my ideological problems remained unsolved. To help me further clarify my mind, the organization then especially sent for my mother and my uncle who worked in the xian committee. My mother told me: 'You should choose an ambitious and progressive-minded young man as your husband. It is not right for you to be taken in by people who have money.' My uncle also tried to give me a piece of good advice by saying: 'You are not clear about two

problems when you are in love. One is: what kind of tender feelings do you need most? The other is: what are your major conditions for choosing a husband? What young people need today is the revolutionary emotions of the proletariat and not the vulgar, tender feelings of the bourgeoisie. The basis for developing proletarian emotions is the sharing of the same interests, aspirations and ways of doing things, and cherishing such a warm love for socialism that one engages in selfless study, work and labour when building a fine, socialist motherland. Vulgar tender feelings such as those cherished by the bourgeoisie should be rejected. When choosing a husband, you must firmly adhere to the principle of giving first place to politics, for ideological progress is a very important factor.'

I accepted the advice patiently given me by the leadership, my mother and my uncle and resolutely rejected the older suitor. I resumed correspondence with the college student after the Spring Festival in 1960, telling him in detail what had transpired. He was not angry with me. Instead, he said in his reply: 'This is because you are young and lack the experience. You took the wrong steps because you were influenced by old ideas. Such mistakes are excusable.'

We were married in 1961. My husband became a teacher in the local middle school while I took part in farm production. We encouraged each other, were considerate to each other, and got along very well.

I realize now that in looking for a prospective husband, one should proceed from the angle of giving first place to political factors, otherwise no true love can be found. Since Xiao Li has not done his work well and has cared little for his own political progress, he is not worth loving. Since Comrade Wang Lan's friend is a League member and because both of you are getting along very well and know how to love and help

each other, is this not a good foundation for developing your love for each other? I hope you will get rid of old ideas, firmly put politics in the commanding position, and choose your revolutionary partner who shares your ambitions, interests, aspirations and ways of doing things.

(b) Letter from Wang Aqiu in reply to a letter written by Wang Lan previously published in Zhongguo Funu. The letter below was published on 1 September 1964:

Comrade Wang Lan:

I read your letter to Zhongguo Funu with great interest. To tell the truth, the difficult problem of yours is not much different from the problem I had for a time in the past. Yet with the help of our organization and comrades I finally got over it. I will describe to you my problem and how I finally resolved it.

I had a boy friend a year ago. A man of bitter origin, he had a deep affection for the Party and a strong aspiration for progress, worked very hard and led a simple life. But his job was an ordinary one and his wages were low. While we were getting along very well, unexpectedly another comrade came my way. He was a technical worker, earning more than my friend mentioned above and leading a more admirable life. But, politically, this man was backward. At that time, I felt the same as you did: to rest love on the foundation of money was both undesirable and unreliable. I therefore positively turned down his courtship.

Unexpectedly, my family and some neighbours heard this thing, and a slight trouble then followed. Some advised me: 'Your family of five depends on you for support. Why not choose one who earns more to help your family?' Others said: 'You still do not face the reality when

you are not well off!' Still others called me a 'fool', saying: 'You simply ask for it.'

To tell the truth, my head had been sober and my attitude had been firm enough. When these people 'beat the drum', however, I was confounded for a time. I thought: 'They are right. While it is not right to seek enjoyment of life in choosing a husband, yet the problem of livelihood remains a problem of livelihood. How can the problem of livelihood be linked with the problem of class stand!' But on second thoughts, I still felt that it was not good to link marriage with 'money'. Thus my mind went through a struggle. What to do? After turning it over and over in my mind, I approached my organization for help. My organization warmly helped me and gave me this advice: 'One's conception of love is linked to one's outlook on life. A revolutionary youth ought to establish a revolutionary conception of love.' At the same time, they encouraged me: 'A revolutionary youth must dare to draw a dividing line against the old thought. This dividing line must be drawn clearly and without ambiguity and adulteration. You must dare to initiate new customs and habits and must never let the confused noise dizzy your head and soften your ears. You must stand firm!' At first, I could not fully grasp what my organization said. I went over 'the revolutionary youth' and 'revolutionary conception of love' word by word. After turning it over in my mind for a long time, I came to understand that what the Party said was to remind me that a revolutionary must think of revolution in what he thinks, says and does. Then I went over in my mind 'whether the problem of livelihood is a long way from the problem of class stand'. When I compared what my organization said with the words of those people, I felt that a dividing line did exist between the two. What my organization said was that revolution must be placed in the first position while

what those people said was that money must be placed in the first position. Clearly these were different words spoken from different stands. Oh, how stupid I was that I should forget Chairman Mao's teachings! Chairman Mao taught us to be good at viewing things from the standpoint of class analysis. It suddenly dawned upon me that this was not merely a question whether it was good to choose this or that man, nor merely a question of how to solve the 'realistic' problem. It reflected a struggle between two conceptions of love! I deeply realized that the problem of livelihood is not a long way from the class stand and that livelihood is permeated with class struggle! If one makes a revolution when he is in office, he must not forget revolution when he is at home. One makes a revolution within the 8 hours (or work) and must not forget revolution outside the 8 hours (in his spare time).

Nevertheless, my recognition of this point does not mean that I had solved every problem. I still thought that life would be better if I had more money; even if it was only a small amount of money, I would not have to be so frugal. How wonderful it would be if I found one whose thought is good and who earns more money! But I suppressed this thought as soon as it raised its head. I blamed myself: How could a revolutionary open a back door to himself! Looking at the Poems of Revolutionary Martyrs at my bed side, I told myself: The Party is right; a revolutionary must be pure and must not be vulnerable to corruption in money matters!

However, reality was still reality. After getting married one will have to organize a family life. I sized up the 'reality' and found that our 'reality' would not be so bad. We would have enough food, clothing and articles for use. The only point would be that we have to be frugal. After all, one must respect facts in one's life, otherwise greediness will have no limit, and will gradually wear away one's revolutionary will.

Once, while we were having a chat, he casually took a book from the book-shelf and opened it for me to read. It was written by martyr Fang Zhimin, who said: 'A clean and simple life which is poor but untarnished is precisely where we revolutionaries can surmount numerous difficulties.' I thought it over: He is right. Even when we have children after our marriage and our burden is heavier, we can be more frugal and we can work harder, which would mean nothing to us. Once we talked about this question: a revolutionary should look forward and take a broad view. One may not confine oneself to the small circle of family. One will be happy and open-minded if one links with the collective. Our country is indeed becoming ever more prosperous. The boat will rise with the river, and our life will get better day by day. When I thought of this, I could not help laughing. What did I laugh at? I felt that those who said I 'did not face the reality' did not face reality themselves!

After this struggle of mind, I am enlightened and am more resolved. I have made up my mind to persuade my family to change their view, and I will continue my good relations with my friend. This twist and turn has given me a profound education. We revolutionaries must not forget revolution. Otherwise, we shall fall into the trap of bourgeois and feudal ideas. If we fall into the trap, it would be too late to repent!

Comrade Wang Lan, let us encourage each other to deal with the problem of livelihood in the name of revolution.

Age of marriage

These two letters were written as part of correspondences on the age of marriage. They are both asking for a solution to the problem of

following conflicting advice - on the one hand the educational materials recommend that they adopt the new ideological model and marry at a later age; on the other hand their own reference groups or slightly older peers were having difficulty in finding a 'suitable' mate. These letters are typical of great numbers of letters on this subject which display a great deal of anxiety as the result of similar competing influences and experiences.

(a) Letter fron Yin Jie, Peking Machinery Plant published in Gongren Ribao, 18 September 1962:

Although the 'numerous benefits of getting married late' have been mentioned time and again, many people have not clarified their thinking on this matter. I think all these benefits only give some consolation to a number of single persons. As a matter of fact, only those possessing skills and drawing higher wages can manage to remain single even though they are older in age. Others cannot afford to do so. Around here, for instance, the following kind of talk has been circulated: 'Look for your mate and hurry up before it is too late! A man cannot find his mate when he is old, and a woman is no longer wanted when she is old.' These words have put great pressure on us. I am nearly twenty-six years old and although I have studied and worked hard, I have become vexed and worried lately. A number of people about my age also have the same feeling. It seems a bit early for people of our age to think of falling in love and getting married, as after all the necessary conditions are still inadequate and besides what is more important at present is for us to apply our efforts indefatigably to our studies and work. But what shall I do if I fail to find my mate when I grow older year after year? After pondering

over this matter, I am in conflict with myself and do not know what to do. I have therefore entered into the discussion sponsored by your newspaper in the hope of getting a solution to my problem.

(b) Letter from Fan Zhenji, Kunming, published in Gongren Ribao, 11 September 1962:

Having seen Comrade Tao Cheng's article entitled 'A Talk with our Young Friends on the Problems of Marriage' published in your paper of 28 July, I learned that many advantages can be reaped from late marriage. Yet in my mind there is still some worry and anxiety that I may not be able to get a wife when I grow older.

Many of my male comrades around the age of thirty have already built for themselves certain foundations either with respect to work, or study or economic power, and conditions really permit them to fall in love and get married. As a matter of fact, they do want to fall in love and get married. However, girls do not wish to fall in love with men of their age. Girls are unhappy when they are told that their boy-friends are men of around thirty years: 'Who would marry a man who has already lived half of his life?' they would say. Unable to find a wife, these men become pessimistic and disappointed, and now regret that they have wasted their youth. I am going to be twenty-six years soon, and although on the one hand I feel it is a bit too early to get married and I want to wait till I am older, I am also worried that I may be like these comrades around me. What should I do?

The ceremonial of marriage

This letter is unlike some of the others in that it does not ask for advice, but reveals the process by which the correspondent first discarded the old and adopted new customs. It is more self-congratulatory in tone that the former ones, and it has to be recognized that the correspondent may well be exaggerating both the strength of the old customs and the degree of opposition which he had to overcome in order to substitute new practices. Nevertheless the case study is an interesting one for it does give some idea of the rationales for the old customs and their persistence, detailed descriptions of both old and new customs and the competing influence of government cadres and primary groups in the village arena. It is evident from other letters and materials that the situation and arguments described by the correspondent were not unusual at that time.

Letter from Lo Donglin published in Zhongguo Qingnian, 19 November 1964:

I was married in the early part of February this year. My wife, Yao Jin xiang is a member of the Yaojin production team, Wangjia brigade, in the adjacent village. We are both poor peasants, basic-level militia fighters, as well as 'five-good' commune members. We broke from outmoded rules and old customs for local weddings handed down from one generation to another and conducted our wedding frugally and plainly, without giving a wedding banquet and without accepting 'tokens of human feelings' [wedding gifts]. We held a new-style wedding ceremony, doing away with all those feudal and superstitious practices such as 'betrothal money' and betrothal gifts, and the ornate sedan chair for the bride.

Our total wedding expenses amounted to only Y2.80. We bought two catties of fruit drops (candy), saving both money and man-hours, and yet still turned our happy occasion into an evening of joyful bustle. As a consequence, we were commended by the commune and the brigade. We ourselves also were proud of our stand, and our parents also held that our wedding had been properly conducted. Now let us talk about the circumstances of how our wedding was conducted.

I had known Yao Jinxiang for several years. We developed deep feelings for each other in the course of seeing each other many times and thus we secretly were in love. When both families learned of our close association at the beginning of last year, they also gave their consent and made preparations for going ahead with betrothal procedures. My mother-in-law, however, proposed this condition - she asked for Y300 as betrothal money for buying betrothal gifts, besides asking for clothes made of pique, woollen underwear, as well as chickens, fish and meats... She also said, 'These are old rules handed down from one generation to another and nobody can do without them.' If my wedding was conducted according to these old rules, the expenses would come to Y400-500. My aging father was at the end of the rope, but he held that there was no reason why the other party, having taken great pains in bringing up their daughter, should not demand and accept the 'betrothal money'. Therefore, he called on his relatives and his friends to borrow money for meeting the expense. When I found that things were not going in the right way, I asked a cadre to go to the family of the bride and talk to them and patiently persuade them to break with the old rules. I myself called on Yao Jinxiang and told her: 'By asking me for this sum of money, Jinxiang, your mother has given me a difficult problem. However, if you agree, I shall be ready to get a loan. But how shall we manage to get by in the future? Will you please think it over?' Jinxiang said, 'Your difficulty is also mine. I don't favour borrowing money for

the purpose of using it as a gift. No matter what happens, we shall be together always. Even if your family is poorer than I think, I will be with you. Please be assured that I will not loathe poverty and love wealth! I shall see my mother and convince her.' Later, when Yao Jinxiang reasoned with her mother, her mother replied, 'I have raised and brought you up and do you think this little sum of betrothal money is enough? In the days of the past, at least two times the amount would be asked for.' Yao Jinxiang said, 'If you put it this way, are you not trying to sell me to another in marrying me off?' When Jinxiang found that her mother was speechless, she went on to say: 'Since we are now in a new society, we shall make others suffer more if we insist on doing things according to the old rules of the past and, besides, we may be opposed by all the others!' When Jinxiang told the story of a relative, named Zhou Aifei, and how he was so heavily indebted after his marriage several years ago with the money he got by selling his house and raising a loan that he had to repay the loan year after year after he was married. Besides, the couple often quarrelled and fought one another - the consequences of asking for 'betrothal money'. After hearing the story, Jinxiang's mother had tears in her eyes. She no longer insisted that I should give her 'betrothal money' and betrothal gifts. This was how we became betrothed without spending a cent.

Last year my family raised two head of fat pig and 20-30 chickens and ducks in preparation for a big feast of 25 tables to entertain their relatives and friends on my wedding day, to show that they had straightened their backs and were living well year after year and in order to conduct a presentable and well-attended wedding for their son. When I learned of this, I felt that something was wrong, but I had no good reasons to dissuade my parents from their folly. Although I kept this doubt to myself for several months, I was always thinking of means to convince

my parents whenever I did my work, had my meals or lay in bed. At the beginning of this year, I accompanied brigade cadres to the commune to attend a meeting of all the three grades of cadres. At the meeting, the secretary of the Party branch of the commune said that since the agricultural situation this year was good, some commune members were getting married. He urged Party and League members, cadres, and activists from among poor and lower-middle peasants attending the meeting to take the lead in conducting weddings frugally, breaking from outmoded rules and old customs and establishing new social practices. As I was determined to become one who would be a pioneer in conducting a wedding frugally, I told my views on the matter to my parents. My father, however, said, 'There is only one marriage in a man's lifetime and therefore it is worthwhile to be wasteful just for once. We should conduct your wedding presentably and in a worthy way.' My mother then told me how she was married to my father in the past: My father was a native of Liencheng, Jiangxi province. Because he gave a small wedding party due to lack of money when he was married here, he was described by gossipers as 'miserly' or 'not generous' and of having brought disrepute to the family. The gossip was not quietened until after he had borrowed 35 pieces of silver dollars from the landlord for another small dinner party of several tables. My mother said, 'We were poor in the past so we could not afford to give a big wedding feast. Thanks to Chairman Mao's blessing, we have now straightened our backs and are living well. We have our own supplies of food, pigs, chickens and ducks and practically everything. Even without our present prosperity, we would have to give a big wedding banquet even with borrowed money if we were poor, for we can no longer stand the ridicule of other people that our family is 'miserly' and 'not generous'. A few days later, the secretary of the Party branch of the commune and

work group called at our home to talk to my parents. The secretary of the Party branch also specifically worked out an account for our family. He figured that if we gave a dinner party, invited guests would have to bring gifts with them and since the expenditure of several hundred yuan and the consumption of several hundred catties of polished rice would be a burden on us, the expression of the 'tokens of human feelings' on the part of the invited guests would also be a burden on them, and besides one's indebtedness would affect one's livelihood in the future and would even more so affect collective production. The secretary of the Party branch explained that if this sum of money was used to meet ordinary expenses, the family would be able to live much better and if these several hundred man-hours were used to improve low-yield farmland, the whole family would be able to increase its income, besides making a contribution to the State. After listening to the Party secretary's sincere explanations and sound reasoning, my parents appeared to have been impressed. They consulted with each other and then agreed to conduct a new-style wedding ceremony, without giving a dinner party. Later, the two head of pig, raised by our family especially for the auspicious occasion and weighing each over 100 catties, were sold to the State.

When word of our impending wedding was quickly passed around in the whole brigade, many of our relatives and friends called on us one after another to learn of the wedding date. They began to prepare for the wedding presents. Some of them went around to borrow money while others called at the credit cooperative to withdraw their savings deposits. Some others went to the market to sell their pigs. All of them were certain that they were to attend the wedding banquet. Although I told them repeatedly that no dinner party would be given, they just would not believe my word. According to old customs and practices, a big dinner

party would always be given whether a wedding or a funeral was conducted, and the relatives and friends of the family on such an occasion would come to offer their 'tokens of human feelings'. A saying popular in this village goes: 'Expression of human feelings is an urgent as repaying a loan and the cooking pot has to be carried on the head to be sold.' This means that expression of 'human feelings' is even more urgent than the repayment of a loan and if one has no money to do so, one has to sell one's cooking pot to meet this obligation. People of the older generation told me that this practice had in the past brought much suffering to many people, for the person who gave the dinner party became heavily indebted while those who gave away tokens of 'human feelings' were also heavily indebted. I pondered over the matter day and night to find ways of persuading them not to send me tokens of 'human feelings'.

I again consulted with brigade cadres. The secretary of the Party branch told me that the action in giving tokens of 'human feelings' was prompted by word of the impending wedding banquet and that if my family insisted that no dinner party would be given, other people would also not bring tokens of 'human feelings'. The Party secretary went on by saying: 'Accepting tokens of "human feelings" is one of the means with which the exploiting classes of the old society used to exploit and enfetter the labouring people. Since this is a feudal and traditional practice that impairs the interests of the labouring people, we young people should resolutely fight it.' I therefore made a round of door-to-door visits to persuade them not to bring any tokens of 'human feelings' when attending my wedding and I told them explicitly that no dinner party would be given and no wedding presents would be accepted. Brigade cadres took advantage of meetings of cadres and commune members to assist me in explaining, by patient persuasion, to my clansmen and relatives the reasons

involved, and explaining thoroughly the advantages of the new practice and the disadvantages of the old practice. After repeated publicity and explanations, all of our relatives and friends realized that the practice of giving tokens of 'human feelings' would entail greater losses than gains. As a matter of fact, none of them was willing to increase his own burden and to ask for trouble. When my cousin, Huang Jinlin, heard that I was going to get married, he was short of money and therefore he borrowed Y45 from the credit cooperative to be used as a 'gift packet'. Another relative of mine, named Wang Xincai, from an adjacent production team, upon learning of my impending wedding, sold his suckling for Y18, to be used also as a token of 'human feelings'. Having explained to them by patient persuasion, I succeeded in convincing both of them to give up the idea of sending me wedding presents. Huang Jinlin returned the loan to the credit cooperative while Wang Xincai bought back his sucking for Y18, the amount which he intended as a token of 'human feelings' for me. Both were very happy for having done so. The rest of over 60 families of relatives and friends, who were ready to give 'gift packets' [wedding presents], also stopped doing so.

As my wedding date was fast approaching, was it appropriate for the bride to leave her house and come to my house on foot, over a distance of 15 li? This was another difficult problem. One day, I called at her house to find out whether any transportation arrangements could be made. She said, 'When other people get married, the bride either sits in a sedan chair or rides on a horse and if I walk to your door, people will talk.' I said to her: 'We are getting married out of our own free will and not the result of an arranged marriage fixed by our parents. In the present new society, women have straightened their back and both men and women are equal, all being the master of the house. Who will say you walk to

the door of the bridegroom's family all by yourself? You are a five-good commune member and a militiawoman as well, and moreover an activist of the production team. You must realize that the most glorious thing now is to be good in thought, in labour and in work. Will it not be even better if we take the lead in conducting our wedding with industry and frugality?' Finally, we saw eye to eye on this matter. On our wedding day, my bride did not put on a flower headgear nor did she wear a red skirt and sit in a sedan chair according to the old customs and practices which prevailed locally. Instead, she wore an appropriate and plain dress of printed cloth. It was I who took her from her house to my home. We walked the distance of 15 li to my house, talking and laughing on the way. On that day, the production team was energetically improving the low-yield farmland so brigade cadres advised me not to perform any labour in the field and to take a good rest for one day. I said, 'I have to labour in the field, because my wedding will not take place until the evening.' When the wedding ceremony was conducted in the evening, Chairman Mao's picture was hung on the wall in the middle of the living room with congratulatory scrolls on both sides of the portrait. Brigade cadres, members of the work group, and inhabitants of the whole village, male and female, young and old, all came to my house to offer their congratulations. My bride and I first bowed three times before the picture of Chairman Mao and then paid the same respects to our parents and relatives, friends and all well-wishers. Later, brigade cadres spoke to the gathering and we two also did the same, pledging our determination to encourage each other in performing labour. In an atmosphere of joyful bustle, all the guests helped themselves to tea, candy, peanuts and beans, chatting and laughing incessantly. Younger people asked me to tell them the story of my falling in love with my bride, while older people asked

me to relate how I shook off old customs and practices and became a pioneer in promoting new practices. Finally, we all sang together several revolutionary songs to wind up our wedding ceremony. My wife also broke from the old local custom of 'confining herself to her house in the first month since becoming a bride', and left her house three days after her wedding together with several women commune members to improve the low-yield farms. Our married life is a very happy one and we get along very well with each other. The whole family works as a team, helping one another and taking an active part in farm work to make a good job of collective production. We are therefore praised by all members of the production team.

APPENDIX 3

DATA GATHERED FROM THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, APRIL 1977

This appendix summarises the locations and a survey of the materials collected during interviews conducted in Guangdong province in China in 1977. I had requested to be allowed to visit the area in the environs of Guangzhou (Canton) city for a period of ten days or so. My reasons for choosing this location and a short time span were several. I preferred to have a greater time in one location rather than a shorter period in several places, as I particularly wanted the opportunity to observe the contrast between social institutions in the rural and urban social fields. Moreover in such an extensive and varied country as China, the problem of generalising from a particular field situation is not lessened by visiting a few rather than one location. There was the overriding pragmatic reason that Guangzhou province is simply the most accessible social field from Hong Kong and the chances of gaining a visa for this area and for a short time period were probably much better than for other provinces and a longer visit. This area is thus already better documented than most and its unique qualities are well known to anthropologists of China. Because of the time factor I had to be less concerned with the actual marriage patterns themselves than with testing the correlations between the functions of households and their structure in rural and urban areas and the nature of primary groups in each. In examining these subjects from documentary sources, I had found that I was far from clear about questions such as household composition, post-marital residential arrangements and relations between household and kin groups. I hoped that my visit might allow me to make an enquiry into these topics.

This opportunity to individually gather first-hand data in the People's Republic of China was almost unique but of necessity very short, and in the absence of prolonged participant observation, the structured interview of selected households seemed to be the best approach in such a situation. Of the ten days I was in the field, I was only able to interview concentratedly for seven of those days and the weaknesses and omissions of such a limited opportunity are only too apparent. The principal weakness of the visit was that I was not able to interview in an urban neighbourhood in Guangzhou city that was neither based on common employment or ethnicity and thus fully test my hypotheses in one location; at the same time, however, the principal strength of the data lies in the unique opportunity to survey the entire population of one small rural village. The fact that I had been in China before and that the visit came towards the end of the writing-up of this study, meant that I was able to be selective and concentrate on those areas where the documentary data was the least satisfactory. My previous knowledge of the subject and the area enabled me to make the most of a very short time in the field. In the event I was able to collect some very unusual data on marriage, the household and primary groups from a selection of rural and urban locations in Guangzhou.

Locations

Jiang village like the other rural villages visited is to be found in the densely-populated rice-growing region of the Pear River Delta. The small village which was entirely surveyed, and which I have called Jiang village after its common surname, had a population of 147 residents in April 1977 and was the largest of three villages which made up

production team number eleven (230 population). In turn it was one of the 322 teams which constituted the 31 production brigades of Huadong commune. Huadong commune in Hua county is 40 km north of Guangzhou and it has 71,000 mu of agricultural land which is mainly devoted to paddy rice, peanuts, fruit, fisheries and some sideline occupations. The materials for this thesis were also collected from two other villages in different communes. Yue village (585 pop.) composed number one production team of the 299 teams which made up the twenty-five production brigades of the Renhe commune. This commune is a suburb of Guangzhou and 24 km north of the city centre. Renhe commune has 67,000 mu of agricultural land and mainly grows paddy rice, peanuts and has some forestry, animal husbandry, fisheries and sideline occupations. The third village, Hao Mei village (480 pop.) is one of the 343 production teams that make up the nineteen production brigades of Dali commune which, like Renhe, is also a suburb of Guangzhou city. It is located 15 km south of the city and mainly grows paddy rice, vegetables and fruit.

In addition to these three rural villages, comparative data was also drawn from interviews conducted within two urban housing estates in Guangzhou city. One was the factory housing estate attached to the Guangzhou Heavy Machinery Plant which was composed of blocks of flats and single-storey bungalows, and the other was a housing estate on the banks of the Pearl river which was a resettlement area now inhabited by former boat people, often considered to be a distinct ethnic group (see Ward 1965). In each of these locations I used a questionnaire which gave all the interviews a common structure (for a sample questionnaire, see the end of this appendix). I followed a sequential list of questions on the household, primary groups and marriage, the replies to which I filled in at the time

of the interview. I also tape recorded each of the interviews to act as a check on my written comments.

The household

The first question on entrance to each household was always to ask one of its members to describe the age, sex and occupation of the persons in the household. Members of a household did not always share a common residence in the villages or in the housing estate of the former boat people, rather a household was defined by a single kitchen and a single budget.

Household composition

In Jiang village there were 79 male and 68 female residents and the age distribution shows a surprising number of male children under the age of ten years* and that the majority of the population is under forty years of age.

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* On the basis of this small sample the malproportion may occur by chance. In commenting on these figures, William Parish has pointed out that in earlier studies, malproportion doesn't begin in the earliest ages, but around age five continuing through to age 14. He suggests that this malproportion usually comes from girls in this age bracket being misidentified as boys by the surveyor because the surveyor judges sex by misleading nicknames (personal communication). In this case the sex of the members of the household were given by a representative of each household in their own household in the presence of other members of the household, the village and the commune. Members of the household wandered in and out at will and were introduced on each occasion. It seems unlikely that in these circumstances misrepresentation of sex accounts for this discrepancy in the numbers of boys and girls.

Table 13: Jiang village: age distribution of persons

AGE IN YEARS	MALE Number	Percentage	FEMALE Number	Percentage	TOTAL Number	Percentage
0- 9	25	32	14	21	39	26
10-19	11	14	12	18	23	16
20-29	18	23	17	25	35	24
30-39	13	16	10	15	25	16
40-49	5	6	3	4	8	5
50-59	4	5	7	10	11	7
60-69	3	4	3	4	6	4
70-79	-	-	1	1.5	1	1
80+	-	-	1	1.5	1	1
	79	100	68	100	147	100

Current residential arrangements illustrated on Figure 15 reflect past household divisions and reveal that 12 of the 27 households had more than one house. Unlike the other two villages in which interviews took place, there seems to have been a surplus of housing and housing land in Jiang village. Several houses, new and old, stood empty and several plots of land were available for building. In the other two villages where the pressure on housing was more acute, sons and daughters of a household might sleep with peers in whose houses there were a surplus of beds. In one case, sons who had returned from the army had turned an old factory building into a temporary sleeping accommodation until their family's additional house was built.

In Jiang village the size of the households ranged from the largest of 9 persons to the smallest of three members.

Table 14: Jiang Village, Range in Household size

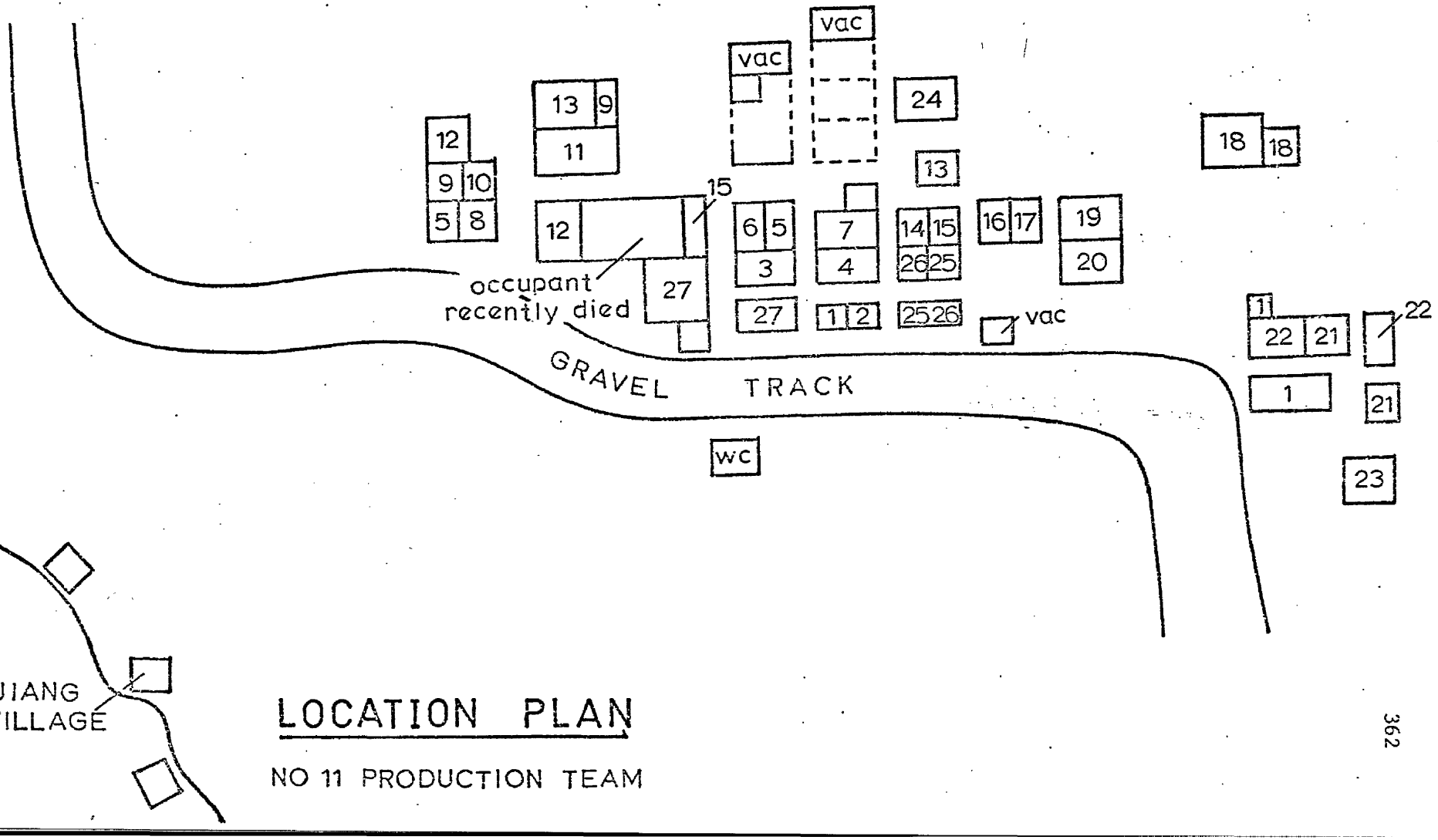
NUMBER OF PERSONS	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS
9	1
8	1
7	4
6	7
5	7
4	4
3	3
	27

The details of the individual members in the twenty-seven households are given at the end of this Appendix.

note : numbers refer to household code nos.

newly built houses used for storage (not yet occupied)

yards, potential building plots



LOCATION PLAN

NO 11 PRODUCTION TEAM

In the other two villages the majority of the households were composed of 4, 5 or 6 persons and in Hao Mei village, households ranged from one household of one person to three or four of 8 to 9 persons. In Yue village there were more single person households and the range was more extensive. It was estimated that about 40 households had one or two persons and there were five or six with ten or more persons. In the two single-person households interviewed, one consisted of a man of about 50 years whose wife had died and daughter had married and moved out of the village. He worked in the production team and cooked for himself. In the other a 73-year-old mother of two married sons in the village lived alone. She cooked for herself, but her sons supported her by giving her grain and some cash each month and the members of their households helped her by carrying water and performing other household tasks. The largest household in this village had 12 members composed of the mother, two married sons and their wives, two unmarried sons, two unmarried daughters and three grandchildren.

It was particularly noticeable in answer to these questions that in all three villages a high value was attached to the number of sons. When members of the household were presented or listed by the senior representative of the household, the sons were enumerated before the daughters and daughters-in-law regardless of age order. In families with several sons there was a degree of confidence and investment in the future of the domestic group not characteristic of families with one son and many daughters. The former households gave the impression of planning and saving for future expansion and development, one in which sons would marry and recruit wives and later separate into their own households nearby. There is a close correlation between the number of sons per household and the households which had built new and additional houses.

Of the seven households which had recently built a new house, six had three or more sons who were reaching marriageable age.

Household division

The second group of questions in this section concerned the post-marital residential arrangements and the division of households. The relations between household division and the developmental cycle of the domestic group have already been discussed in Chapter 9. In all rural locations marriage proved to be virilocal and a widowed mother with two daughters refused to be drawn as to whether she would like one of her daughters to remain within her household following her marriage. The personal property of the conjugal couple was nearly always defined in terms of their furniture and the furnishings of their room. As far as could be ascertained there was no separate conjugal cash fund, rather they equally contributed to and had claims on the familial fund of the whole household. The details for household division in Jiang village are given in Chapter 9. The largest joint family in Yue village comprised the mother, two married sons, and their wives, two unmarried sons, two unmarried daughters and three grandchildren, and did not plan to divide until all the sons were married. They had already built a new house in anticipation of family division some time in the future. There were a few joint families in Yue village, and in the commune the example of the largest joint family where there had been no household division was that composed of the parents, four married sons and their wives and children all totalling eighteen persons. The sisters-in-law worked in their production team and two of the sons worked in Guangzhou living in factory dormitories and returning home once a week.

Like Jiang village current residential arrangements in both villages reflected past household divisions and because of the pressure on living or housing space in each of these villages many households were dispersed in which family members slept elsewhere but ate with their parents. Sometimes brothers who separated from each other many years ago still lived in neighbouring half suites while their children slept in another house recently built by the family or were dispersed among several houses.

As in Jiang village, it was common for families in these two villages to divide on the birth of the third generation. In one household where I interviewed residents in Haomei village there had been a family division in 1972. Instead of one household there were now three. In the year of the marriage of the second son the father decided it was time to divide the household. He said that there appeared to be too many people in the household and it made for very complicated housekeeping. 'One person might return home early for a meal and have to sit around and wait for everyone to come back home.' Already in 1970, two years before division, he had arranged to build a new house costing 1,300 yuan out of the family savings. At the time of division a second new house was built and into that he, his wife and one unmarried son had moved. In the original family house and the first new house resided the two elder married sons and their families. He had also divided what was left of the family savings and their movable property. Although the father now resided with his wife and unmarried son he was counted as a member of his eldest son's household because he ate with them for reasons which it was difficult to ascertain. The remaining 25-year-old unmarried son who was to be married to a 24-year-old girl from another production brigade in the next year was now saving to build a small house with a

bedroom and rooms for storage for himself and his wife. The three sons each continued to contribute to the support of their parents and the three households came together to celebrate the Spring, New Year and other festivals and birthdays.

In the factory housing complex it was usual for married elder sons to leave the households of parents. Sometimes they remained immediately after marriage, but this was seen to be a temporary arrangement until the young couple were given a house by the enterprise for which they worked. The allocation of separate housing was not always possible at the time of marriage for there is a general shortage of housing in Guangzhou. In one household the family were about to partition their general family room in order to temporarily accommodate their elder son on his forthcoming marriage. In the housing estate of the former boat people all the houses had been distributed in 1965 and those that had been married subsequently were allocated rooms as they became vacant. Usually these were in the same block or adjacent blocks of the estate. In households where I interviewed, couples who were newly married or had a small child often remained in the same household as the parents of the husband in that they all ate together and contributed to one household budget. It was not unknown for couples to remain in the same household as the wife's parents. Where there was more than one child the households were usually quite separate. In a case where a daughter and her husband, three children and husband's father lived adjacent to her parents and mother's mother they were two quite separate households although they shared a kitchen and general family room. The elder son and his family lived in a nearby block in a separate household. All sons contributed to the support of the parents unless the parents had a pension, when they usually received gifts and delicious food on special occasions.

It was particularly unfortunate that I was unable to interview outside of these rather specialized urban locations, in one case based on common employment and in the other on ethnic ties. I have the strong impression from talking to other individuals (drivers, interpreters, hotel workers, cadres) from the same city that elsewhere neolocal residence after marriage was very common and that siblings could be quite dispersed within the city with parents residing nearby one child who might just as commonly be a daughter as a son.

The household economy

The questions on the economy of the household were divided into two sections: the source of their income and the distribution of their income between savings, food and clothing, housing, celebrations and individual allowances. In all rural households the economy of the household was reckoned collectively and the wealth of the household depended on the labour resources of the household or the ratio of wage-earners to the total number of persons in each household. In rural areas all the households received some portion of their income in kind and the remaining portion of earnings were paid in cash. In Jiang village the main differentials within the village were reflected in the ratio of wage-earners to wage dependents in each household. These ranged from one household in which all three members were wage earners to four households in which there were twice as many dependents as earners.

There is some correlation then between the ratio of wage earners to dependents with the structure of the household. Of those with less than the average ratio of wage earners to dependents, 7 out of 10

Table 15: Ratio of Wage Earners to Household Members in Jiang Village

HOUSEHOLD CODE NO.	NUMBER OF PERSONS	NUMBER OF EARNERS	RATIO OF EARNERS TO TOTAL	STRUCTURE OF HOUSEHOLD
1	7	4	.57	S (Stem)
2	5	2	.40	C (Conjugal)
3	6	4	.67	S
4	6	2	.33	C
5	8	5	.63	S
6	4	2	.50	C
7	6	2	.33	C
8	6	3	.50	S
9	7	4	.57	C
10	4	2	.50	C
11	5	4	.80	C
12	6	2	.33	C
13	3	3	1.00	C
14	5	2	.40	C
15	5	2	.40	S
16	4	2	.50	C
17	3	1	.33	C
18	5	2	.40	C
19	7	5	.71	S
20	6	3	.50	S
21	9	7	.78	S
22	4	3	.75	C
23	5	3	.60	S
24	3	2	.67	S
25	7	5	.71	C
26	5	2	.40	C
27	6	2	.33	C
	147	80	.54	

Ratio of wage earners to total population: 0.54

Ratio of wage earners to total population in stem households: 0.61

households were stem families and of those with the higher ratio of dependents to earners, 11 out of the 17 were conjugal in structure. The main differences in the ratios of wage earners to dependents varied according to whether the children of the household had reached wage-earning ages.

In addition the production team had allotted 4 per cent of its lands to the private plots and each household said that it was self-sufficient in vegetables. None of the households reported a surplus which was marketed, rather any surplus was used to feed the pigs. Each household reared pigs which were sold to the State for an average of 60 yuan cash each and the household received coupons to the value of 40 per cent of the meat of the pig with which to purchase pork. Most households also reared chickens for eggs and meat.

In one household where there were seven persons made up of five wage earners and two dependents, the grandmother and a young grandson, they received an average of 72 jin of food grain per month per person last year. The main source of cash income had been that distributed to them by the production team according to the number of work points they had earned and this totalled 700 yuan including the earnings of the son who worked in the commune shop. In addition the household received 120 yuan from selling two pigs each year. They grew all their own vegetables and most of the meat came from the two pigs and 15 chickens and hens. Their most substantial expenditures over the last few years included one new house in 1966, which cost between 1,000 and 1,500 yuan, an additional room in 1973, their elder son's marriage (1,000 yuan), a sewing machine, and two or three bicycles. They also remarked that clothes made of artificial fibre were quite costly. They had saved a lot of expenditure by making their own furniture, although they had to

purchase the wood and an array of tools which adorned the walls of the family room. In another household, also composed of seven members, where there were five wage earners, the average grain ration was 63 jin per person per month. They received a total of 1,500 yuan in cash from the production team, the cash wages of a daughter working in the commune shop and their sideline occupations. They grew all their own vegetables on a 1.3 mu private plot and reared two pigs and chickens each year. Their main expenses had included the materials for a new house in 1968 and since then additional rooms, their son's marriage (900 yuan), their elder daughter's marriage (2-300 yuan) and three bicycles, a sewing machine, a radio and a number of wristwatches. They also had a 1,000 yuan saved in the bank.

The average cash income from collective sources of 590 yuan in Jiang village was slightly higher than in Yue and Hao Mei villages where it was 526 and 500+ respectively. In one household in Yue village there were eight persons of whom four were full-time members of the production team (the sons, daughter, daughter-in-law and the parents formed one full-time member between them) to three wage dependents. Last year they earned a total of 18,000 work points from which they received an average of 53 jin in grain per person per month (ranging from 72 for the oldest male to 22) and 1,100 yuan in cash. They had a private plot of .24 mu on which to grow cabbage, sweet potato and other vegetables for their own use. Last year they had sold three pigs to the State in return for 260 yuan cash and meat coupons. Their recent expenditure included the addition of two rooms to the house (houses here cost 3,000 yuan a module), two bicycles, two sewing machines and two wrist watches. They made their own clothes and they had to buy very little in the way of food. In Hao Mei village there was a greater cash

income from sideline occupations than in Jiang or Yue villages. In all the households interviewed outwork in the form of constructing fireworks distributed by a state-owned enterprise could contribute as much as 300 yuan annually to the household budget. In one household with four labourers the income was 2,100 in cash and kind. Of this they received 1,400 in case after deductions of grain and medical expenses. They also received 300 yuan from the sale of four pigs to the state and around 300 yuan from fireworks. Out of this income, 100 yuan is set aside for the support of the father's mother and contributed to the household budget of his brother. They had spent 1000 yuan on a house in 1971 and have bought three bicycles, a sewing machine, three wristwatches, an electric fan and a radio.

In urban locations the cash wages of the household members were the sole form of revenue for the household. In contrast to rural areas, the income and expenses of the urban household are reckoned on an individual basis. The monthly expenditure of the household are calculated and divided among the wage-earning members. For example in several households where members were interviewed, the living expenses were reckoned on a per capita basis per month with all members contributing periodically to the purchase of some consumer item. The remainder of each individual's income is at his or her disposal. The incomes of the households varied according to the ratio of wage-earners to dependents and the phase of the developmental cycle. A sample of the breakdown of family incomes is given below.

Figure 15: Urban Household Composition: a sample from Guangzhou city

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS	AGE	OCCUPATION	INCOME
mother	not known	retired	-
son	not known	factory worker	131 yuan
d-in-law	not known	factory worker	43
son	30	student tech. coll.	15 + meals
son	24	worker oil company	45
daughter	22	worker beer factory	38
son	16	school	-
daughter	14	school	-
mother	81	retired	
son	42	factory worker	150 yuan
d-in-law	42	factory worker	150 yuan
son	17	school	
son	15	school	
son	13	school	
mother	60	retired	30 pension
son	30	vice-leader factory worker	46
d-in-law	28	doctor in clinic	46
daughter	24	teacher middle sch.	42
daughter	22	staff worker, rev. committee factory	39
mother	60	restaurant worker	60
son	30	factory worker (neighbourhood)	45
d-in-law	25	factory worker (neighbourhood)	39
son	2	-	-
sister of mother	68	retired	-
mother	98	retired	-
son	67	retired	47
d-in-law	64	staff worker (neighbourhood)	45
son	32	shipyard worker	47
d-in-law	28	furniture factory	42
son	3½	-	-
son	28	factory worker	50
son (non-resident but contribute to budget)	25	school teacher	42
son (non-resident but contribute to budget)	23	public security bureau	44
mother	100	retired	-
son	76	retired	60 pension
daughter	68	neighbourhood worker	30

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS	AGE	OCCUPATION	INCOME
father	-	-	
son	45	factory worker	100
d-in-law	44	factory worker	
son	22	medical worker	40
son	14	study	-
daughter	17	study	-

Figure 16: Urban Household Accounts: a sample from Guangzhou city

	FACTORY HOUSING			HOUSING ESTATE			
No. of persons	8	4	5	5	8	3	6
No. of wage earners	6	2	5	3	7	2	3
No. of wage dependents	2	2	-	2	1	1	3
Total income (yuan)	272	150	203	144	317	90	140
Per capita expenditure per month (yuan)	20	22	29	20	15	14	15

In nearly all cases in both rural and urban areas a member of the senior generation of the household, and women as equally as men, tended to manage the family budget. Although a qualification was nearly always added that decisions regarding its distribution were the results of joint discussions and a common consensus.

The division of labour within the household

This was the least satisfactory section in terms of hard data and I tended to abandon this set of questions after the first few days. The ideology of breaking down the traditional divisions of labour within the household and particularly the sharing of the housework are familiar to residents of rural and urban China, and any answers to these questions

were usually expressed in terms of co-operation and sharing. Only participant observation over a much longer time span will provide a clear ideal of how labour is distributed within the household.

In assessing the distribution of women's labour time between the collective, private and domestic spheres of the economy it was difficult to generalise from individual patterns. In some households they were said to be responsible for the vegetables of the private plots, in others these same responsibilities fell to the men of the household; sometimes they were shared. Almost without fail, though, women were responsible for the livestock and maintenance of the household. The most interesting feature to emerge was the complementariness of labour between the women of the older and younger generations, or the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law which has historically been a rather difficult and clearly hierarchical relationship. It is a common occurrence for the new daughter-in-law to become a wage-earner in the collective agricultural work team and for the mother-in-law to wholly or partly retire from the collective sector to manage the side-occupations and service the household.

The grandmother of the household was generally responsible for managing the budget, the daily housekeeping and the care of the young children and pigs and chickens. In all these tasks she was helped by the other members of the household, although in busy agricultural seasons she might not only do the cooking for her own household but also for that of her son's families who were in their own separate households. In less busy agricultural seasons the daughter-in-law might cook for the separate households. In several households each woman member was asked to describe the activities of the previous day. It was a busy time with the simultaneous harvesting of winter wheat and the transplanting of

rice seedlings. Because of this the grandmother in one household in Jiang village had cooked for both her own and her son's separate household. She had also cleaned the houses and spent quite a lot of time preparing food for the household's pigs. This involved the cutting up and boiling of vegetables. She had also watered the vegetables in the private plots. Both her daughter and daughter-in-law had worked in the production team all day, and in their spare time they had helped the grandmother and cared for the children of the daughter-in-law's household. Unlike the other production teams visited in other communes, there were no collective services provided by the team such as child care or corn-grinding.

In urban areas there were clearly not the same demands on women's labour. There were no livestock or vegetable sidelines, and the household seemed to require less in the way of maintenance. Although shopping at the markets was necessary to acquire meat and vegetables, and if a retired woman of the older generation was a resident of the household then she tended to undertake the marketing and some cooking.

Primary groups

I was particularly keen to question the members of individual households as to the whereabouts of close kin and the kinds of economic ties or occasions of co-operation which characterised non-residential kin relations. The responses to these questions and the survey data from Jiang village indicate that all the male residents were surnamed Jiang, that they probably composed a fragment of a higher order lineage and that the village itself was characterised by geographically concentrated clusters of agnatic kin who are either groups of ego's brothers

or father's brothers. The details have already been presented in Chapter 10. In contrast to Jiang village which was a single-surnamed village, in both the larger Hao Mei and Yue villages there were two sets of surnames. Each household interviewed in these two villages could point to close agnatic kin or brothers and father's brothers families who lived in close proximity. Mutual support between households included the transportation of pigs to market, and housebuilding, which I quickly perceived to constitute one of the main foci of kin co-operation in rural areas. Kin came together to celebrate festivals and special family occasions and affinal relatives were also frequently included in the list of kin who had participated in housebuilding and festivities.

In the households interviewed in the factory housing complex, kin were quite dispersed either living elsewhere in Guangzhou, in the native villages of the residents or in one case in Hong Kong. The main points of contact between kin of separate households seemed to be common support for an aged parent and joint celebrations of family birthdays and festivals. The kin resident in the same city might visit each other on rest days and especially on special occasions and festivals. Although individuals might have left their native villages up to fifty years ago, they continued to maintain some contact with their kin there, again mostly on ceremonial occasions. The family with relatives in Hong Kong referred to their annual get-togethers in Guangzhou. Affinal kin were often included in these celebrations of special occasions and they frequently lived in close proximity to the households interviewed. In the housing estate of the former boat people most kin, agnatic and affinal, lived within the estate itself often in the same or in adjacent blocks. In one case affinal kin lived in adjacent flats and shared the same kitchen and bathroom facilities. This concentration of kin and

overlapping of kin and neighbours would seem to be unusual for urban areas and arises out of the common ethnic ties and unique resettlement scheme of the mid-1960s.

Marriage

In every household in which I interviewed, in both urban and rural locations, I took the opportunity to ask a few questions about marriage. In particular I asked for the wife's and/or daughter-in-law's surname, her place of origin, their date of marriage, how they had originally met, the cost of the marriage and about their own conjugal fund. It was much more difficult to ask questions about the now outlawed betrothal gift and the survival of the dowry, but I soon learned that if I asked to see the house I was shown the bedroom of the married members of the younger generations which was a great source of pride to the whole family. I was informed which items were given by the bride's family and which were given by the bridegroom's and the cost of each article, but I was unable to ascertain the relation between gifts and exchanges made at the time of betrothal and the dowry. What was interesting was the differences in the presentation of the furnishings of the newly married members of households in urban areas. They reflected on the thrift and resources of the young couple themselves who had saved up for their purchase. The direct responses to the various questions on marriage have already been distributed between Chapters 4 to 8 as supplementary case studies or comments on those already obtained from documentary sources.

Figure 17: Household Survey: Jiang village

HOUSEHOLD NO.	MEMBERS	AGE	OCCUPATION
1	mother	87	retired
	son	47	driver in Guangzhou
	d-in-law	45	production team
	grandson	24	worker in communications
	grandson	20	production team
	grandson	14	school
	granddaughter	16	school
2	father	29	production team
	mother	28	production team
	daughter	6	
	son	4	
	son	4 months	
3	mother	64	housekeeping
	son	44	worker for machinery shop (county)
	d-in-law	44	production team
	grandson	23	electric power plant worker (commune)
	grandson	20	production team
	grandson	14	school
4	father	34	production team
	mother	33	production team
	daughter	9	school
	daughter	7	school
	son	5	school
	son	1 month	
5	father	57	production team
	mother	54	production team
	daughter	25	production team
	son	23	production team
	son	12	school
	son	16	school
	d-in-law (elder son died)	33	production team
	grandson	4	
6	father	40	worker in construction materials factory (commune)
	mother	34	production team
	son	7	
	daughter	5	

HOUSEHOLD NO.	MEMBERS	AGE	OCCUPATION
7	father	31	worker in coalmine (county)
mother	mother	28	production team
	daughter	7	
	daughter	6	
	daughter	4	
	son	1	
8	mother	52	production team
	son	30	production team
	d-in-law	26	production team
	granddaughter	6	
	granddaughter	5	
	grandson	1	
9	father	45	production team
	mother	44	production team
	son	22	production team
	daughter	18	production team
	son	15	school
	daughter	13	school
	son	11	school
10	father	33	barefoot doctor
	mother	29	production team
	son	6	
	daughter	2	
11	father	63	production team
	daughter	24	production team
	son	23	production team
	daughter	19	production team
	daughter	17	school
12	father	42	worker grain processing plant (commune)
	mother	36	production team
	daughter	12	school
	son	10	school
	daughter	7	school
	son	3	
13	mother	55	production team
	son	25	production team
	son	23	production team
14	father	38	worker machinery factory (county)
	mother	33	production team
	son	12	school
	son	8	school
	son	6	school

HOUSEHOLD NO.	MEMBERS	AGE	OCCUPATION
15	mother	71	retired
	son	30	production team
	d-in-law	29	production team
	grandson	2	
	granddaughter	7 months	
16	father	30	production team
	mother	26	production team
	son	4	
	daughter	1	
17	father	68	retired
	mother	67	retired
	son	26	worker in coalmine (State)
18	father	38	production team
	mother	32	production team
	daughter	11	school
	son	8	school
	son	5	
19	mother	60	retired
	son	33	production team
	d-in-law	30	production team
	granddaughter	1	
	son	29	shop (commune)
	daughter	26	production team
	son	20	production team
20	father	69	retired
	son	29	production team
	d-in-law	30	production team
	grandson	2	
	son	14	school
	daughter	23	production team
21	father	53	production team
	mother	51	production team
	son	29	hydro-power plant (commune)
	d-in-law	29	production team
	daughter	26	production team
	son	23	production team
	daughter	19	production team
	son	13	school
	son	8	school
22	father	53	peasant in Hong Kong
	mother	51	production team
	son	20	production team
	daughter	15	school

HOUSEHOLD NO.	MEMBERS	AGE	OCCUPATION
23	father	34	production team
	mother	29	production team
	son	6	school
	son	2	
	sister of father	22	production team
24	mother	59	retired
	son	33	production team
	d-in-law	29	production team
25	father	54	production team
	mother	51	production team
	daughter	25	worker commune shop
	son	23	production team
	daughter	20	production team
	son	16	school
	daughter	14	school
26	father	33	worker commune factory
	mother	30	production team
	son	7	school
	son	5	
	son	3	
27	father	38	grain processing plant (commune)
	mother	39	production team
	daughter	12	school
	daughter	10	school
	son	7	school
	son	7	school

A SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

1 Can you describe the age and sex of the persons in this household?

2 Where do the wives come from?

3 Who chose them?

4 At what age were they married?

5 In what rooms do married sons and daughters of the household live?

6 What property does the married couple own?

7 Where does this property come from?

8 What do they contribute to the family budget?

9 Has there been, or is there likely to be, a division of the household?

10 Where do close relatives live in relation to the household?

11 Are there any economic ties or other co-operation with non-resident relations?

12 What are the main sources of income in cash and in kind from the production team?

13 Are any members of the household paid a wage which they contribute to the budget?

14 What proportion of income is from private sources?

15 How large is the private plot?

16 What is grown on the private plot?

17 What livestock is owned by the household?

18 What proportion of products and livestock is grown for the use of the household?

19 What proportion of products and livestock is sold in local markets?

20 How is the income of the household distributed between savings, food and clothing, housing, celebrations and individual allowances?

21 Who manages the budget?

Questions for each woman member of the household:

1 What is the number of labour days you contribute to production team enterprises?

2 What are the main types of work which you undertake in the production team?

3 What is the payment you receive from the production team for your work?

4 What is the amount of time you spend working in the private plot?

5 What is the amount of time you spend looking after livestock owned by the household?

6 Is there any special payment for this?

7 What are the main types of housework you undertake in each season?

8 What is an example of the type of daily housework which you undertook yesterday?

A SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR URBAN HOUSEHOLDS

1 Can you describe the age, sex and occupations of the persons in this household?

2 Where did the spouses meet?

3 At what age did they meet?

4 At what age did they get married?

5 Did they have the consent of their parents?

6 Did they set up a new household on marriage?

7 What property did they have on marriage?

8 Where do close relatives live in relation to this household?

9 Are there any economic ties or other co-operation with non-resident relations?

10 What are the main sources of income of the household?

11 How is the income distributed between savings, food and clothing, rent, celebrations, individual allowances and other expenses?

12 Who manages the budget?

13 What neighbourhood services does the household use?

14 What domestic work is done within the household?

15 Ask each woman member of the household to describe a daily routine.

APPENDIX 4

SELECTED STATISTICAL DATA

This set of figures has been included more as a negative example than anything else, in order to show the limitations of the statistical data available for this study. It is scattered and piecemeal, but even if it were not, there remains the problem of what is meant by the definitions of 'arranged' and 'free-choice' marriage. This thesis has argued against the use of this simple dichotomy for it ignores the range of conscious models in which both parties and parents combine to negotiate the selection of a marriage partner.

APPENDIX 4

DATE	LOCALITY (BY PROVINCE)	M. CASES	ARRANGED MARRIAGE	FREE-CHOICE MARRIAGE	SOURCE
1-4/1951	6 provinces central-south region			90,425	NCNA 5 March 1955
1951	8 qu in 8 xian in Shaanxi	2,047	22%	88%	NCNA 31 January 1953
1-9/1951	10 cun (villages) in one xian in Hebei	60	32%	68%	NCNA 31 January 1953
1-6/1951	178 villages in 1 county in Chahaer	400	311		P's C 1 June 1952
1950) 1951)	Lanzhou, capital of Gansu	-	-	36% 98%	P's C 1 March 1953
1951(?)	188 villages in 1 county county, Henan province			80%	P's C 1 March 1953
1951	2 rural districts in 1 county, Shandong	-	290	227	Kan, 1965: 6
1951	1 rural county in Hebei			120	Yang, C.K. 1959: 33
1951	Rural town in Shandong	-	-	488	Yang, C.K. 1959: 33
1951	7 counties, Zhejiang 4 counties, Anhui 1 county, Jiangsu		66%	34%	Yang, C.K. 1959: 34
1951-52	Jiangxi province			121,000	NCNA 31 January 1953
11/1951 -12/1952	Yanzhi xian in an unspecified province	39	26	13	NCNA 9 February 1953

DATE	LOCALITY (BY PROVINCE)	M. CASES	ARRANGED MARRIAGE	FREE-CHOICE MARRIAGE	SOURCE
1-6/1952	Unspecified areas in North Jiangsu	-	19,894	30%	CR, September 1953
1-6/1952	1 xian in Ningxia	250	59%	41%	NCNA 9 February 1953
1952	388 xiang in Henan			100% in 150 xiang	P's C 1 June 1952
8/1950 -8/1952	1 xiang in Shaanxi	13	12	1	NCNA 31 January 1953
1-8/1952	Sian city (Shaanxi)	-	-	90%	P's C 1 March 1953
1953	1 co-op in Shaanxi	20	-	5	ZQ 1 November 1956
3/1951 -1953	1 county in Henan	-	-	4,600	NCNA 4 March 1953
3/1953	5 cities in Hebei	-	-	97.4%	CR September 1953
1-3/1954	562 xian in municipalities or 15 provinces	402,025	-	98.73%	NCNA 5 March 1955
1955	27 provinces and municipalities	-	-	95%	P's C 16 November 1957
1955-6	'backward regions'	-	70%	30%	Estimated (Meijer 1971: 146)
1956	rural areas Shaanxi	-	-	90%	ZQ, 30 August 1956

GLOSSARY OF TERMS REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

(listed in order of first appearance)

fumu baoban ernu hunyin 父母包辦兒女婚姻
arranged marriage

ziyou jiehun 自由結婚
freedom of marriage

hunyin ziyou 婚姻自由
free-choice marriage

xiaxiang 下鄉
educated youth

meiren 媒人
matchmaker

jiazhang 家長
head of the household

jiben youfen ren 基本有分人
basic shareholders

zhuogei youfen ren 搭給有分人
optional shareholders

maimai hunyin 買賣婚姻
marriage by purchase

hu 戶
household

caili 彩禮
gifts of betrothal

tanqing shuoai 談情說愛
courtship

jiao pengyou 交朋友
make friends through dating or courtship

dingqin/dinghun 訂親/訂婚
betrothal

shidu 適度(當)
appropriate

zaohun 早婚
early marriage

wanhun
late marriage 晚婚

lianai zhishang
supremacy of love 戀愛至上

biao
cousins of different surnames 表

tang
cousins of same surname 堂

zhao duixing
choose a spouse 找對象

zuanze airen di biaozhun
norms for selecting a spouse 選擇愛人的標準

zhitong daohe
to be of one mind and purpose 志同道合

lichang
standpoint 立場

shijie guan
world viewpoint 世界觀

jiazhuang
dowry 嫁妝

jiehun yishi
marriage ceremony 結婚儀式

huangdao jiri
auspicious days 黃道吉日

bai jiuxi
marriage feasts 擺酒席

jieshao ren
introducer 介紹人

qiuhun
proposal of marriage 求婚

jindaide ziyou jiehun
free-choice marriage in the modern way 近代自由結婚

xiaodao
filial 孝道

buxiao zhizi
unfilial son 不孝雜子

zu
lineage 族

caoshuai jiehun
hasty marriage 草率結婚

luantan lianai
fickleness of love 亂談戀愛

xixin yanjiu
to like the new and
to oppose the old 喜新厭舊

zhaosan musi
changeability and untrustworthy 朝三暮四

zhengzhi diwei
political status 政治地位

boxiao jieji qushan
exploiting class origins 剝削階級出身

chengfen
class status 成分

jiating chengfen
family background 家庭成分

qiantu/chuxi
future 前途/出息

zunzhong/zongbai
social status/respect 尊重/崇拜

anjia luohu
settle down permanently 安家落戶

mingmei zhengzhu
marriage properly conducted 明媒正娶

timian
pride, 'face'. 體面

fenjia
household division 分家

xianhua
gossip 閒話

jinqin
close kin 近親

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